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DIVINE AUTHORITY

OF THE

OLD AND NEW TESTAMENT

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WITH A PARTICULAR VINDICATION

OF THE

CHARACTER OF MOSES, AND THE PROPHETS, OUR SAVIOUR
JESUS CHRIST, AND HIS APOSTLES,

AGAINST THE UNJUST ASPERSIONS AND FALSE REASONINGS OF A BOOK,

ENTITLED,

THE MORAL PHILOSOPHER.

TO WHICH IS ADDED

A DEFENCE OF THIS BOOK

AGAINST

THE EXCEPTIONS AND MISREPRESENTATIONS IN THE SECOND VOLUME OF THE
MORAL PHILOSOPHER.

BY, JOHN LELAND, D. D.

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P R E F A C E.

A JUST liberty of thinking (which on the one hand is not governed by old and popular prejudices, nor on the other hand led aside by the affectation of novelty and a desire of thinking out of the common way,) which hath nothing but truth in view, and the serving the cause of real goodness and righteousness, is certainly one of the noblest things in the world. To be a freethinker in this, which is the most proper sense of the word, must be owned to be an honourable and amiable character. This the enemies of our holy religion are sensible of, and therefore they have done themselves the honour to assume this character as if it were their sole privilege, and a distinction that sets them above the rest of mankind. But as no man is a freethinker or a good reasoner, merely for calling himself so, the justness of their pretensions to that character must be examined by other things than their own confident boastings. If these gentlemen were really what they pretend to be, the sincere lovers and friends of truth, and of a just liberty of thinking, this would appear by their fair and ingenuous way of treating the argument they have undertaken. We should be able to trace in their conduct and in their writings the fair and beautiful lines of candour and sincerity, an impartial love of truth, and an openness of mind to conviction and evidence, a modesty of sentiment, and a calm and serious temper of mind becoming the importance of the inquiry. But I shall hardly be thought severe, if I say, that he that would look for any thing of this kind in the writings of those that have lately appeared amongst us in the cause of infidelity, would find himself very much disappointed. Bold and confident assertions he will everywhere meet with, many things that discover high conceit, of their own sagacity and penetration, and a contempt of others that do not think in their way; a willingness to use any arts of misrepresentation to serve their cause; and a strong desire to give an odious or a ludicrous turn to every thing where revelation is concerned; and all covered over with a pretended regard (though it must be owned the disguise is generally very thin) for that religion they are using their repeated endeavours to subvert and to destroy.

But amongst them all there is scarce any who hath rendered himself more remarkable this way than one that hath lately ap-

peared under the character of the 'Moral Philosopher,' though, if there be any morality in writing, I never knew any that had a less just pretension to this character. I would be one of the last to charge any man with a want of honesty and sincerity; but there are many things in his book that look like a wilful perversion and misrepresentation of facts as well as arguments; and sometimes so circumstanced, that it is scarce possible for the most extensive charity to suppose that it was owing to mere ignorance. Perhaps the author himself would not be willing to accept of this apology. I cannot help looking upon it as an honour to Christianity, that its adversaries find themselves obliged to take such methods as these, in order to carry on their designs against it. Does not this argue a secret consciousness that they can never prevail by a fair attack upon the Scriptures? For surely he must be either very wicked or very foolish that would have recourse to such base arts as these to serve his cause, if he thought his end could be answered without it, and that fair and just reasoning and an equal candid management would do as well.

This author pretends to go farther in his concessions, than some of his brethren and fellow-labourers in the same cause. He acknowledgeth the great usefulness of revelation, in aid of human reason in the present corrupt state of mankind; and seems to find fault with those who maintain, that 'under the present pravity and corruption of mankind, the religion of nature is written with sufficient strength and clearness upon every man's heart;' and who therefore are not so thankful as they ought to be 'for the light of the gospel,' p. 145. And though he openly and avowedly rejects the Old Testament, and plainly declares that he will have 'nothing to do with it in religion;' yet if we were to judge of his sentiments by several passages in his book separately considered, one would be apt to think that he entertained very favourable thoughts of Christianity. It were easy to fill several pages with direct and formal passages, where he speaks honourably of Jesus Christ, and the religion he hath introduced, as having brought clearer discoveries of our duty, and enforced it by stronger motives, and provided more effectual aids, than ever was done before. And he expressly declares himself to be a 'Christian upon the foot of the New Testament,' p. 352. But if we compare these with other passages in his book, we shall find reason to think that all his pretended regard for Christianity, and the religion of Jesus is only the better to carry on his design of subverting it. At the same time that he affects to speak with great respect of Jesus Christ, he insinuates several base reflections upon his conduct and character; and justifies those that put him to death as acting like good patriots, who were under a necessity of doing what they did out of a regard to the welfare and safety of their country. Though he pretends to acknowledge the usefulness of divine revelation, and particularly of the revelation brought by Jesus Christ in the present corrupt state of mankind, he leaves us no way of knowing when a divine revelation is really given; and particularly endeavours to

destroy the proof on which the authority of Christ's divine mission, and of the Christian revelation is established, drawn from miracles, prophecy, and the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost: yea, he absolutely denies them to be any proofs at all. Though he sometimes talks of the great benefit of the light of the gospel, yet he will not allow that any one thing was discovered by that revelation but what was known as well before, except 'salvation by Jesus Christ as the Jewish Messiah,' that is, as he explains it, the national deliver of the Jews, and the restorer of the kingdom to Israel in a temporal political sense. This very thing which he all along explodes as false and absurd, he represents as the only proper article of the Christian faith,* and as the whole of that gospel which was preached by all the apostles, except St. Paul, who, he pretends preached a different gospel from the rest. He professeth to be a Christian on the foot of the New Testament, and yet he represents it as 'leaning strongly towards Judaism,' and as a jumble of inconsistent religions, and not at all to be depended on for a just account either of doctrines or facts. And what plainly discovereth his determined malice against the New Testament, is, that he pretends the canon, as we now have it, was 'corrected, revised, and published by the Jews, who altered it according to their own prejudices and false opinions; even by those very Jews who soon after, upon being disappointed in Jesus, set up Barchocab for their Messiah,' pp. 440, 441. Finally after all the compliments he pays to revelation in general, and to the Christian revelation in particular, as of great use in the present corrupt and degenerate state of mankind, and notwithstanding his acknowledgment that the religion of nature is not written with sufficient strength and clearness upon every man's heart, yet when he comes to describe the true religion, or moral philosophy, as he calls it in the latter end of his book, and the means by which it is to be obtained, he doth not send men to the gospel for instruction, but sends every man to the light of nature in his own breast, to 'the heaven, to the earth, and especially to the brute creatures, to learn, reason, virtue, and religion.' Where he seems to put a special note upon the brute creatures as much more proper instructors than books of historical religion, which is the title he usually thinks fit to bestow upon the Holy Scriptures, see pp. 418—430.

This may give the reader some notion of this writer's candour and sincerity, and what we are to think of his pretended regard for Christianity, which in effect amounts to this: that the Christianity revealed in the writings of the New Testament is Jewish Christianity, that is, Christianity corrupted and adulterated with Judaism, which according to him is the worst religion in the world. But the true and genuine Christianity is Christian Deism, to be learned not from the writings of the New Testament, but from the volume of nature, from every man's own breast, from the heavens, the earth, and 'especially the brute creatures,' the genuine uncorrupted

* See p. 349.

instructors in our author's Christianity. So that the gentlemen that assume to themselves the title of Deists, seem resolved that for the future they only shall be called the true Christians too. Those that look upon the New Testament to be divinely inspired, and receive it as the rule of their faith, and take their religion from thence, must be called Christian Jews, who only put a strange mixture of inconsistent religions upon the world for Christianity: whereas these Christian Deists teach it in its purity, and in order to propagate pure uncorrupted Christianity they do their utmost to discard the writings of the New Testament, that is, the writings that give us an account of the doctrines taught by Christ and his apostles. But since these gentlemen will not allow us the honourable title of Christians, it is but fair that they should leave us that of Free-thinkers, to which I really think the advocates for the gospel revelation have a much juster pretension than they. But they seem to be too fond of this title to part with it. All the religion this writer seems willing to allow us is only an historical, political, clerical, mechanical faith and religion, which are terms of art he often makes use of to describe revealed religion; whilst he appropriates real religion, and 'moral truth and righteousness,' to himself, and those of his own faction.

Thus, whatever the rest of the world think of these gentlemen, they are resolved to think very well of themselves. If others will but take their words for it, they must pass for the only free-thinkers, the only moral philosophers, and the only men of sense; for he lets us know, that there is not 'a man of sense in England' that goes to church for any other reason but for fear of the imputation of atheism, that the clergy would otherwise lay upon him, p. 115. They are the men, and wisdom must die with them; the only men of real religion, and friends of moral truth and righteousness; and finally, in their own opinion, the only true Christians. It will be easily allowed, that their pretensions to all these characters are alike just and well-founded.

But besides all this, they seem to set up for a kind of infallibility too. This writer talks of his moral philosopher's having his 'understanding irradiated with the beams of immutable eternal reason,' which he calls an 'infallible light from heaven to teach and inform us how to act.' He represents him as 'receiving intelligence and information from eternal wisdom, and hearing the clear intelligible voice of his Maker and Former, speaking to his silent undisturbed attentive reason;' whereas others that seek for information in religion from books 'meet with nothing but confusion and distraction, a Babel of faith and religion.' He often talks as if he and those of his way, who pretend wholly to govern themselves by the principles of moral truth and righteousness, had an infallible criterion of divine truth, by which they were secured from error, and in which men cannot be mistaken. He represents the principles of the religion of nature as what all men must agree in, whereas they are for ever divided in points of mere revelation, p. 94. But how comes it then, that this writer, in this very book, thinks himself obliged to argue

against some of his brethren, who he tells us would be thought to be 'great philosophers and very wise men,' who yet deny man's free-agency, the obligations of the duty of prayer, and God's continual and immediate agency and influence in the government of the world? I suppose he will hardly pretend that these are uncertain and of no importance, because men, and those too that profess to be impartial inquirers, are divided about them. For he tells us, that these things are of 'infinite consequence to mankind;' and yet in several parts of his book he raises a mighty stir about the differences among Christians, with relation to the articles of their faith, as if this were a demonstration that these doctrines are uncertain and obscure, and of no use to mankind. An argument that may be turned with equal force against natural religion, and against the common principles of sense and reason.

He expresses his apprehension, that this performance of his would raise up all the clergy of the nation; that 'the silversmiths would be all in an uproar; the judaizing clergy would be in arms; and many large elaborate volumes would be written, and a thousand sermons preached against his book.' He also foretels, that they would 'clearly and triumphantly confute all that he had said, without so much as answering any one objection,' see pp. 11, 357, 358. All that can be concluded from this is, that he looks upon himself to be a writer of very great importance. But I do not find there has been so general an alarm, or that his attack against revealed religion has been judged so very formidable as he seems to apprehend. Perhaps to have taken no notice of him at all would have been a greater mortification to this writer than the best answer that could be published against him. And yet, on the other hand, it is not unlikely that in the opinion he seems to have formed of his own sufficiency, he might be ready to flatter himself that if the friends of revelation did not answer him, it was because they could not do it. Indeed I should think it of very little consequence to the world what he thought of this matter; but possibly the suffering such an insolent attack upon revealed religion to pass unregarded might be of disadvantage in an age already too much inclined to infidelity. This writer's smart and confident way of saying things, and the high pretences he every where makes to reason and demonstration, may be apt to impose upon some that will not give themselves the trouble of a very close examination. And the objections he has raised give occasion to the clearing some difficulties, and to the setting some things in a proper light, that they may be of service to those who, though they are not without their doubts, are willing to be informed. I thought therefore it might be of use to enter upon a strict examination of this philosopher; in which I have not willingly concealed the strength of any objection he has advanced, and perhaps have considered several things he offers more fully and particularly than some will judge needful.

This work is entirely confined to the objections he urgeth against the Old and New Testament, and therefore no notice is taken of the account he pretends to give of the sentiments and practice of the primitive Christians, though this might

furnish us with farther proofs of the injustice and disingenuity of this writer. Nor have I meddled with his invectives against the 'clergy, the priests, the theologasters, the system-mongers, the faith-mongers,' &c. These are things so much to be expected from writers of this kind, that they only pass for words of course. He acknowledgeth indeed that many 'ecclesiastics of the several denominations are wise and reasonable men;' but I believe they will scarce feel themselves obliged to him for his compliment, since he insinuates at the same time that they are in his own way of thinking. But as for those that stand up for 'positive, instituted, revealed, and political religion, or the religion of the hierarchy,' for all these are in his language the same thing, he plainly lets us know that it 'is not his design to distinguish between one sort of clergy and another, because in this case they are scarce distinguishable,' p. 94.

I have endeavoured in the following answer to dispose his objections into some order, than which nothing can be more confused and irregular as they lie in his book. I first consider what he offereth concerning the proofs of divine revelation in general; and then proceed to examine the objections he hath advanced against the Old Testament or the law of Moses and the prophets, with regard to which he acteth an open undisguised part, and nowhere concealeth his malice. In the last place the authority of the New Testament, and the doctrine and character of our Saviour Jesus Christ and his apostles, is asserted and vindicated, and his pretended account of the Jewish Christianity detected. The summary of the several chapters which followeth this preface will give the reader a fuller view of the design and method of this work; in which several things are considered more fully than would have been necessary, if I had nothing in view but precisely to answer the book before me. As I have once before engaged in a work of this nature, I sometimes beg leave to refer to it that I may not be guilty of needless repetitions.

Our author declares in his preface that he had no other design in view than to 'serve the cause of virtue and true religion.' How far the methods he makes use of are consistent with such a design, the impartial reader will determine. I can sincerely profess that the reason of my undertaking this work is because I am firmly persuaded that the cause of Christianity is the cause of God, of religious truth and virtue: that to assert the authority of the Scriptures is one of the best services that can be done to mankind, and even to the interests of natural religion, the main principles of which are there most clearly explained, most strongly established, and most powerfully enforced: that if the Christian revelation were once discarded, the strongest restraints to vice and wickedness would be removed, and the most effectual motives to the practice of virtue and the purest morals, together with those glorious and divine hopes which are the chief support and joy of a good man's life, would be subverted, or in a great degree weakened: that to take the Scriptures out of the hands of the people would be to give

them up to all manner of wickedness, ignorance, superstition, and false worship, and to leave them exposed to be practised upon by artful and designing men, against all which a thorough acquaintance with the Holy Scriptures, and a firm adherence to them as the great rule of faith and practice, is the most effectual preservative.

I can scarce form to myself an idea of a revelation whose doctrines and precepts have a more manifest tendency to promote the honour of God and the good of mankind, or that is more remote from the views of worldly ambition, avarice, and sensuality ; in a word, that carries in it greater internal characters of goodness and purity, or is attended with more illustrious external attestations of a divine original. Nor are the difficulties that attend it greater than may well be expected, supposing a revelation really given to mankind. Several of these difficulties are obviated in the following book, and if what is here offered may be of service to the interests of real religion and important truth, I shall not repent the pains I have been at under much bodily weakness to serve so glorious a cause.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

	Page
The Moral Philosopher's concessions concerning the usefulness of Divine Revelation in the present corrupt state of mankind. He leaves no way of knowing when such a Revelation is really given. His pretence that moral truth and fitness, as appearing to our understandings, is the only proof or evidence of divine Truth, or of any doctrine as coming from God, examined. That not only the persons to whom the Revelation is originally and immediately made, but others also, may have a sufficient assurance of its being a revelation from God, so as to make it reasonable for them to receive it as of divine authority. And particularly that miracles may be so circumstanced as to furnish a sufficient proof of a person's divine mission, and of the divine original and authority of doctrines and laws attested and confirmed by those miracles. The Author's exceptions against this considered. And what he offers to show that a Divine Revelation cannot be conveyed to us by human testimony, so as to be a matter of divine faith, examined.	1

CHAPTER II.

An Entrance on the Author's Objections against the Old Testament. The strange Representation he makes of the Law of Moses. Some general considerations concerning the Nature and Design of that Law. Its moral Precepts pure and excellent. Its ritual Injunctions appointed for wise Reasons. The Nature of its Sanctions considered. Reasons of God's erecting the People of Israel into a peculiar Polity. Nothing absurd in this Constitution. It was designed in a Subserviency to the general Good. The miraculous Facts whereby that Law was confirmed, not poetical Embellishments, but real Facts. The Author's Reasons to prove that those Facts could not be understood in a literal Historical Sense shown to be vain and insufficient.	26
---	----

CHAPTER III.

The Author's Arguments against the Law of Moses from the Authority of St. Paul considered. Our Saviour Jesus Christ, and the Apostle Paul, strongly assert and confirm the divine original of the Law of Moses. The diminishing and degrading manner in which that Apostle seems sometimea to speak of that Law, accounted for. The Instances the Author produces to show that there was no end of that Law but what the Apostle expressly contradicts, examined. The attempt he makes to prove that there was no such Typical or Mystical Sense of the Law as St. Paul supposes in his arguings with the Jews. No Absurdity, but a Beauty and Harmony in supposing that what is obscurely hinted at in the Law is more clearly revealed in the Gospel.	47
---	----

CHAPTER IV.

The author's objections against the Law of Moses from the internal constitution of that law, considered. His pretence that that law extended only to the outward practice and behaviour of men in Society, and that the obligation of it with respect to civil and social virtue extended no farther than to the members of that Society, and that they were put into a state of war with all the rest of the world. It is shown that that law required an inward purity of heart and affections. The great tenderness and humanity that appears in its precepts. It required a kind and benevolent conduct, not only towards those of their own Society, but towards	
---	--

strangers. That constitution not founded in the principles of persecution. It tolerated all that worshipped the one true God, though not conforming to their peculiar rites and usages. The punishing idolatry with death in the commonwealth of Israel accounted for. No obligation by that law to extirpate idolatry, and destroy idolaters in all other countries by fire and sword. His pretence that Moses directed the Israelites to extend their conquests through all nations, and that their constitution and plan of a government was contrived for it, examined. The contrary to this shown. The military laws, Deut. xx. explained. Whether that law absolutely prohibited all alliances with idolaters. 68

CHAPTER V.

The author's pretence that the law of Moses encouraged human sacrifices as the highest acts of religion and devotion when offered not to idols but to the true God. Such sacrifices plainly forbidden in the law to be offered to God. His account of Lev. xxvii. 28, 29, considered. The argument he draws from the law for the redemption of the first-born turned against him. The case of Abraham's offering up his son Isaac considered at large. Not done in conformity to the customs of the Canaanites. The true state of the case laid down. Human sacrifices not encouraged by this instance, but the contrary. Abraham himself had full assurance that this command came from God. Upon what grounds his having had such a command from God is credible and probable to us. It could not be owing to the illusions of an evil spirit; nor to the force of his own enthusiasm. The author's pretence that this instance destroys the law of nature, and leaves all to mere arbitrary will and pleasure, examined. 86

CHAPTER VI.

The Moral Philosopher's account of the original of sacrifices and of the priesthood, and of Joseph's first establishing an independent priesthood in Egypt. The representation he makes of the Mosaical priesthood, considered. The priests had not the government of the nation vested in them by that constitution, nor were they exempted from the jurisdiction of the law, nor had an interest separate from and inconsistent with the state. Concerning the church revenues established by the law of Moses. The particular manner of providing for the maintenance of the priests and Levites accounted for. The author's pretence, that it was an insufferable burden and impoverishment to the people, and the cause of their frequent revoltings to idolatry, examined. Some observations concerning the sacrifices prescribed under the Mosaical economy. The author's objections against them considered. No sacrifices were to be offered in cases where civil penalties were expressly appointed by law, and why. The atoning virtue of the sacrifices supposed to consist in the sprinkling of the blood. This shown not to be a priestly cheat, but appointed for wise reasons. 106

CHAPTER VII.

His pretence that the law of Moses made no distinction between morals and rituals, and never urged things as in themselves fit and reasonable; and that the stories of the miracles recorded there were the cause of the Jews' obduracy and impenitency throughout all their generations. His bitter invectives against the Jews, and the strange representation he makes of that people, with a view to cast a reproach upon their law. It is shown, that by the advantage of their law, they far exceeded all other nations in the knowledge of religion, and that they were famed for wisdom even among the heathens. The proper use that should be made of the accounts given us of their faults, and of the punishments inflicted on them. 118

CHAPTER VIII.

A transition to the author's objections against other parts of the Old Testament. Concerning the two different turns, or distinct popular appearances, which he pretends the Spirit of Prophecy took in Israel. And first concerning the Urim

and Thummim. His account of the original and design of that oracle considered. The attempt he makes to destroy the credit of it, because of the part it had in the war against the Benjamites for the injury done to the Levite and his concubine at Gibeah. The whole transaction particularly considered. His account of the ceasing of that oracle, and the reasons he assigns for it, examined. The order of prophets, by his own confession, a wise and excellent institution. The strange inconsistent representation he gives of their character and conduct. The way he takes to account for their foretelling future events, shown to be insufficient. Their predictions not merely general and ambiguous, but clear, express, and circumstantial. The difference between the false prophets and the true, considered. No argument to be drawn from the former to the disadvantage of the latter. Page 128

CHAPTER IX.

Some general reflections on the attempt the author makes, to show that the prophets were the great disturbers of their country, and that they were of persecuting principles, enemies to toleration and liberty of conscience. It is shown that they were the truest friends to their country, and that if their counsels had been hearkened to, its ruin would have been prevented. His invective against the prophet Samuel, whom he represents as the founder of the prophetic order. His pretence that he kept Saul twenty years out of the exercise of the royal power, after he was chosen king. The account he gives of Samuel's quarrel against Saul for deposing him from the high-priesthood, and of the several plots laid by him for the destruction of that prince, especially in the affair of the Amalekites, considered. In what sense it is said that it repented God that he had made Saul king. That this was not a pretence of Samuel to cast his own follies and want of foresight upon the Almighty. David's character considered and vindicated. His behaviour towards Saul shown to be noble and generous. Notwithstanding the faults he was guilty of, in his general conduct he was an excellent person. Concerning his dancing before the ark. The author's base representation of it. Lord S——y's account of it, and of the saltant naked spirit of prophecy considered. 152

CHAPTER X.

The author's farther invective against the prophets considered. His account of their pretended conspiracy against Solomon. The rending the kingdom of the ten tribes from the house of David, not owing to the intrigues of the prophets, but to the just judgments of God. The prophets not the authors of the several civil wars and revolutions in the kingdom of Israel. The favourable account he gives of Ahab and Jezebel and the other idolatrous princes, as friends to toleration and liberty of conscience. The falsehood of this shown. His attempt to vindicate the persecution raised against the true prophets of the Lord. Concerning Elijah's character and conduct, and particularly concerning his causing Baal's prophets to be put to death at Mount Carmel. The case of Elisha's anointing Jehu to be king of Israel, with a commission to destroy the royal house of Ahab considered; as also his management with Hazael. The charge this writer brings against the prophets fomenting the wars between the two kingdoms of Israel and Judah, and at length occasioning the ruin of both, shown to be false and inconsistent. 177

CHAPTER XI.

His charge against the prophets that lived before the Assyrian captivity, that they declaimed only against idolatry, and not against the other vices and immoralities of the people. The falsehood of this shown. The excellent scheme of religion and morals taught by the ancient prophets. His pretence that the whole nation of the Jews, from the time of Moses to Ezra, were Sadducees or deistical Materialists; and that they received the first notions of a future state from the Persian magi, examined. His account of the change introduced into the Jewish religion at that time shown to be groundless and absurd. A future state implied in the law, and all along believed among the people, and clearly intimated in the writings of the prophets. This proved from several passages. 194

CHAPTER XII.

A transition to the Moral Philosopher's objections against the New Testament. Though he pretends a very high respect for our blessed Saviour, yet he insinuates several reflections upon his conduct and character. Those reflections shown to be groundless and unjust. Our Lord did not comply with the prejudices of the people in any thing contrary to truth, or to the honour of God. He was far from assuming to be a temporal prince, yet he all along claimed to be the Messiah promised and foretold by the prophets. The author's pretence that he renounced that character at his death, shown to be false. The Messiah spoken of by the prophets, was not merely to be a national Deliverer of the Jews, nor were the benefits of his kingdom to be confined to that nation only, but to be extended to the Gentiles. This shown from the prophecies themselves. The attestation given to Christ's divine mission, by the prophecies of the Old Testament, considered and vindicated. 204

CHAPTER XIII.

The author's charge against the apostles, examined. His pretence that they themselves were far from claiming infallibility, considered. It is shown that they did profess to be under the unerring guidance and inspiration of the Holy Ghost, in publishing the gospel of Jesus; and that they gave sufficient proofs to convince the world of their divine mission. The attestations given to Christianity and to the doctrines taught by the apostles, by the extraordinary gifts and powers of the Holy Ghost, considered and vindicated, against our author's exceptions. His pretence that those gifts of the Holy Ghost might be used like natural faculties and talents, according to the pleasure of the persons who were endowed with them, either for the promoting truth or error; and that the false teachers, as well as the true, had those extraordinary gifts and powers, and made use of them in confirmation of their false doctrines, examined at large. 217

CHAPTER XIV.

The gospel taught by the apostles was the same. The author's account of the Jewish gospel, preached by them, false and groundless. The pretended difference between St. Paul and the other apostles, concerning the obligation of the law of Moses on the Jewish converts, examined. None of the apostles urged the observation of that law, as necessary to justification and acceptance with God, under the gospel; though they all judged it lawful to observe the Mosaic rites for a season. The wisdom and consistency of this their conduct, and the entire harmony between St. Paul and the other apostles in this matter, shown. The pretended difference between them relating to the law of proselytism to be urged on the Gentile converts. The decree of the Apostolical Council at Jerusalem, considered: and the reasons and grounds of that decree inquired into. No proof that the apostle Paul disapproved or counteracted that decree. The conduct of that apostle at his trial, justified. 230

CHAPTER XV.

The author's pretence that the apocalypse is most properly the Christian revelation, and that it is there that we are principally to look for the doctrines of Christianity, considered. There is nothing in that book to countenance the worship of angels, invocation of saints, or prayers for the dead. Salvation is not there confined to the Jews only. His account of the fifth monarchy which he pretends is foretold in that book, shown to be false and absurd. The attempt he makes against the whole canon of the New Testament, under pretence that it was corrupted and interpolated by the Jews, and that Christ's own disciples reported doctrines and facts according to their own false notions and prejudices, examined and disproved. 250

CHAPTER XVI.

The Moral Philosopher sets up for rectifying the errors of Christians with regard to some of the particular doctrines of Christianity. His objections against the doc-

	Page
trine of Christ's satisfaction, considered. There is nothing in it contrary to justice. The fulness of the satisfaction not inconsistent with a free pardon. It doth not rob God of the glory of his mercy, and give the whole praise to Christ. The pretence that Christ's satisfaction is needless because repentance alone is sufficient without it, examined. It doth not destroy the necessity of personal repentance and obedience, but establisheth it. Christ's prayer to the Father that the cup might pass from him not inconsistent with the notion of his dying for the sins of the world. The author's assertion that there was no such thing as vicarious sacrifices under the law of Moses; and the way he takes to account for Christ's being called a propitiation, examined. The representation he makes of the gospel doctrine of pardon upon repentance. His absurdity and inconsistency in this shown. His attempt against the positive precepts of Christianity, considered. The arguments he draws from the differences among Christians, to prove that none of the doctrines of revealed religion are of any certainty or use to mankind, shown to be vain and inconclusive. His encomium on Moral Philosophy. The Conclusion.	261

PART II.

INTRODUCTION.

	Page
The author's confused way of talking about revelation. His account of the anti-fidel faith examined. Concerning the infallibility of the Biblical historians. Revelation not confined to things above reason, nor opposed to the fitness of things. The advantage of divine revelation as additional to the light of nature, and the harmony between reason and revelation shown. The author's charge against his adversaries, as placing the most important divine truth upon the foot of human fallible authority, considered. He confounds the question concerning the means of conveying that revelation to us. Its being conveyed to us through the hands of fallible men, no prejudice to its certainty or divine authority. The summary he pretends to give of the reasoning part of the book he undertakes to answer, very unfair and disingenuous.	296

CHAPTER I.

An examination of what the author represents as the main principles of his book. Their absurdity and inconsistency shown. His account of the nature of truth, and the grounds of its communicability; and the attempt he makes to show that truth cannot be proved by authority, considered. That authority may in many cases be of advantage for ascertaining us of truth, and that a divine authority, or testimony, may be of signal use in matters of religion and morality. This particularly shown with regard to the Christian revelation.	311
---	-----

CHAPTER II.

The question concerning the proper proofs of truth, as coming from God, stated. The author's ambiguities detected. Our not being able to explain the particular manner of extraordinary revelation, or immediate inspiration, no objection against the reality of it. Things originally received in a way of extraordinary revelation from God, capable of being communicated to others, to whom the revelation was not immediately made. Exceptions against this considered and obviated. In what sense miracles may be proofs and evidences of the divine authority of persons or doctrines. The true notion of miracles explained. The propositions the author lays down relating to them, examined. His objections against the proof of doctrines from miracles, shown to be vain and inconclusive	326
--	-----

CHAPTER III.

Page

The miracles wrought by Moses vindicated against the author's objections. The case of the Egyptian sorcerers, and their miracles, considered. His attempt to prove that Moses might have been assisted by some supernatural evil power, because his miracles were wrought not for the good, but for the destruction of mankind, and were done out of a particular partiality to the Israelites. The nature of those miracles, and the end for which they were wrought, prove they could not be the work of an evil being. The miracles of Jesus Christ vindicated. Not merely wrought to procure attention from the people, but designed as proper proofs and attestations to his divine mission, and the truth and divine authority of his laws and doctrine. The wonderful effects of Christ's miracles not owing to the strength of imagination. The extraordinary miraculous facts, wrought in attestation of the Mosaic and Christian dispensation, come to us with sufficient evidence to make it reasonable for us to believe the truth of these facts. . 342

CHAPTER IV.

The law of Moses is in itself reasonable and excellent. This does not render the attestation given it by miracles needless; but strengthens and enforces it. The covenant of peculiarity not a vain pretence and national delusion. The argument brought against it from the authority of St. Paul and the nature of the Abrahamic covenant considered. The God of Israel not represented in Scripture as a national, local, tutelar deity. The author's strange way of accounting for some of Moses's miracles. The extravagance of his suppositions shown. The objections against his being the author of the Pentateuch, considered and obviated. The plan Moses laid down for the conquest of Canaan, not inconsistent with the nature of the promise made to Abraham. Other exceptions of this writer considered. 363

CHAPTER V.

The testimony given by St. Paul to the divine inspiration of the Scriptures of the Old Testament vindicated against the author's exceptions. The apostle recommended those sacred writings as of divine authority to the churches which he founded among the Gentiles. He regarded the law of Moses as having been originally of divine institution, though he knew by revelation it was no longer to be in force under the gospel. Objections against this obviated. The typical reference of that law vindicated. His attempt to prove that St. Paul was not the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews considered 363

CHAPTER VI.

That the law of Moses did not extend only to the outward actions, but the inward dispositions. That it did not confine benevolence to those of their own particular body, nor was founded in the principles of persecution, shown, in opposition to the author's attempt to prove to the contrary. What he further offers to prove, that human sacrifices were indulged and encouraged in that law, shown to be vain and insufficient. His exceptions, with regard to the case of Abraham's offering up Isaac, considered. That patriarch vindicated from his charge of enthusiasm. 399

CHAPTER VII.

What he offers to show the whole power of the government, by the Mosaic constitution, was vested in the tribe of Levi, examined. His vain attempt to vindicate what he said concerning the priests having twenty shillings in the pound upon all the lands of Israel. The falsehood and extravagance of his computations shown. The burden of the legal priesthood not the cause of the revolt of the ten tribes from Rehoboam. The law of Moses did not forbid all inquiries into the

	Page
reasons of its injunctions. Reasons for several of those injunctions given in the law itself. Sabiisme prohibited in the law of Moses, which was the most ancient kind of idolatry that prevailed among the eastern nations.	414

CHAPTER VIII.

The oracle of Urim and Thummim not designed to try private judicial causes. The answers of that oracle did not depend on the pleasure of the high priest. The author's continued misrepresentation of the story of the Levite's wife, and the war with the Benjamites, detected. The clear and circumstantial predictions of future events given by the ancient prophets, a proof of their divine inspiration. Their writing not corrupted by the after-revisors and editors. The distinction between the true and the false prophets asserted, against this writer's exceptions. His attempt to vindicate the charge he had brought against Samuel. A particular examination of his farther invectives against David.	427
--	-----

CHAPTER IX.

His vindication of what he had said against the prophets, and particularly concerning Elisha's management with Hazael, considered. What he farther offers to show, that the prophets were the principal fomenters of the war between Israel and Judah, proved to be false and groundless. The difference between the Baal-ithish idolatry and that of Jeroboam shown. The heathen idolatry, not merely the worship of the one true God, by the mediation of inferior deities. Our author's account of the ancient Persians considered. Their doctrine of two principles, not the same with that of the Jews and Christians. They were worshippers of the sun and of fire. His account of Zoroaster's doctrine, concerning the future punishment of the wicked. His pretence that our Saviour's doctrine, concerning the resurrection and a future judgment, was a transcript from the second book of Esdras considered. That a future state was believed among the ancient Jews, vindicated against this writer's exceptions.	452
---	-----

CHAPTER X.

The restoring the kingdom to Israel in a temporal sense, and the bringing all nations into subjection to the Jews, not an essential character of the Messiah according to the prophets. What he offers to prove that the apostles were not under an infallible guidance examined. His account of the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost, and especially the strange and absurd representation he makes of the gifts of tongues, considered and exposed. Concerning the power of working miracles in the apostolical age. It did not depend upon those that had this power, to make use of it as they themselves pleased for the propagation of error as well as truth.	470
---	-----

CHAPTER XI.

The author's attempt to vindicate what he had said concerning the apostle's preaching different gospels, shown to be vain and insufficient. His censures on the Apocalypse considered. The doctrine of Christ's satisfaction farther vindicated against his exceptions. His concluding attempt to prove that there are plain marks of imposture in the law of Moses; and particularly that it was calculated to advance the carnal worldly interest of the politician, and that it gave a large indulgence to personal intemperance, and the lusts of uncleanness. The strange representations he makes of the law of jealousy. The injustice of his reflections upon it shown. The conclusion.	485
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THE DIVINE AUTHORITY

OF THE

OLD AND NEW TESTAMENT ASSERTED,

&c.

CHAPTER I.

The Moral Philosopher's concessions concerning the usefulness of Divine Revelation in the present corrupt state of mankind. He leaves no way of knowing when such a Revelation is really given. His pretence that moral truth and fitness, as appearing to our understandings, is the only proof or evidence of divine Truth, or of any doctrine as coming from God, examined. That not only the persons to whom the Revelation is originally and immediately made, but others also, may have a sufficient assurance of its being a revelation from God, so as to make it reasonable for them to receive it as of divine authority. And particularly that miracles may be so circumstanced as to furnish a sufficient proof of a person's divine mission, and of the divine original and authority of doctrines and laws attested and confirmed by those miracles. The Author's exceptions against this considered. And what he offers to show that a Divine Revelation cannot be conveyed to us by human testimony, so as to be a matter of divine faith, examined.

THE Moral Philosopher, in several parts of his book, speaks of Revelation with respect. He nowhere expressly denies either the possibility or usefulness of Divine Revelation in general. On the contrary, he seems plainly to assert that it may be of great use in aid of human reason in the present corrupt state of mankind. What he offereth to this purpose, pp. 143—145, is very strong and express. He there acknowledgeth that at the time of Christ's coming into the world, mankind in general were in 'a state of gross ignorance and darkness,' with respect to 'the true knowledge of God and of themselves, and of all those moral revelations and obligations we stand in to the Supreme Being, and to one another.' That they were under 'great uncertainty concerning a future state,' and the 'concern of divine providence in the government of the world,' and at the same time were filled 'with a proud and vain conceit of their own natural abilities and self-sufficiency.' That 'our Saviour's doctrines on these heads,' though they 'appeared to be the true and genuine principles of nature and reason, when he had set them in a

proper light, yet were such as the people had never heard or thought of before,' and 'never would have known without such an instructor, and such means and opportunities of knowledge;' and that it doth not follow, that because these are 'natural truths and moral obligations,' that therefore 'there could be no need of Revelation to discover them:' as the books of Euclid and Newton's Principia 'contain natural truths, and such as are necessarily founded in the reason of things,' and yet 'none but a fool or a madman would say that he could have informed himself in these matters as well without them.' He speaks of our 'natural weakness and inability,' and represents those as 'conceited of themselves,' who talk of 'the strength of human reason in matters of religion' in the present state of mankind. He saith that they 'who would judge uprightly of the strength of human reason in matters of morality and religion, under the present corrupt and degenerate state of mankind, ought to take their estimate from those parts of the world which never had the benefit of Revelation; and this, perhaps, might make them less conceited of themselves, and more thankful to God for the light of the Gospel.' He asks, 'if the religion of nature, under the present pravity and corruption of mankind, was written with sufficient strength and clearness upon every man's heart, why might not a Chinese or an Indian draw up as good a system of natural religion as a Christian, and why have we never met with any such?' and he adds, that let 'us take Confucius, Zoroaster, Plato, Socrates, or the greatest moralist that ever lived without the light of Revelation, and it will appear that their best systems of morality were intermixed and blended with much superstition, and so many gross absurdities as quite eluded and defeated the main design of them.'

All this seems fairly to grant the need there is of a divine revelation, and its great usefulness and expediency, in the present corrupt state of mankind, to instruct them in things of considerable importance, and to give them more clear and certain knowledge in matters of religion and morality, than they could have by the mere strength of their own reason without it. One would be apt to think that such an acknowledgment could only be made with a friendly design to establish the authority of Divine Revelation, and to prepare men's minds for a more favourable reception of it. But this does not appear to be the author's real and prevailing intention. Whilst he seems to make such fair concessions, he finds another way to make that revelation, the usefulness of which he would be thought to acknowledge, to be really of little or no use or authority at all. For he in effect leaves us no way of knowing or being assured when such a Revelation is really given. And it is the same thing with respect to the use it may be of to mankind to say, 'that no Revelation was ever given, or that it is entirely needless,' and to say, 'that if it be given, we can have no way of knowing with sufficient certainty that it is given, so as to make it reasonable for us to depend upon its authority.'

He maintains, that 'whatever certainty God may convey to a

man's mind by inspiration or immediate revelation, the knowledge of such truth can go no farther upon divine authority, or as a matter of divine faith, than to the person or persons thus inspired, or to whom the original revelation is made; and whoever afterwards receives it from them must take it upon their sole credit and authority, and not upon a divine testimony, or the authority of God; in which case he believes in them, and not in God, unless God should in like manner reveal to him that he had made such a prior revelation to them, and then the proof of their revelation would be needless to him,' p. 82. He expressly asserts, that 'the certainty any man may have concerning any truth by immediate revelation from God is not naturally communicable. For he could not convince any other man not thus inspired, that he had any such revelation from God. If God speaks to me immediately and directly, I believe him upon his own authority without any human interposition; but if a man speaks to me as from God, I must take his own word for it, unless he could prove to me the natural reasonableness or fitness of the thing; and 'then I should take it indeed as coming from God, but not upon any human authority at all. In a word, there can be no such thing as divine faith upon human testimony; and this absurd supposition has been the ground of all the superstition and false religion in the world,' pp. 83, 84. And the whole truth of the matter he thinks, in short, is this,— 'There is one, and but one certain and infallible mark or criterion of divine truth, or of any doctrine as coming from God, which we are obliged to comply with as a matter of religion and conscience; and that is the moral truth, reason, or fitness of the thing itself, whenever it comes to be fairly proposed to and considered by the mind or understanding. The ways of conveying the doctrines of religion to the mind of man, and of proposing them to a fair and equitable consideration, may be various and different. They may be proposed and conveyed to the mind by inspiration or immediate revelation from God, by historical traditional evidence, or by the exercise of men's natural faculties, by which those truths occurred to the mind under the evidence of their moral reason or fitness: but in which soever of those ways the doctrines and truths of religion are conveyed and proposed to the mind, the ground and reason of their reception and belief, and their evidence and proof as coming from God is still the same, *i.e.* the moral eternal reason and fitness of the things themselves, as appearing to the understanding upon a fair impartial consideration and judgment of reason;' see pp. 85, 86, compared with p. 10. Here we may observe, that he plainly puts human testimony or tradition, and inspiration or immediate revelation from God, entirely on the same foot in point of authority: that the one no more than the other is in itself a reason for my believing any thing that cometh to me from another person in either of these ways. But I believe it both in the one case and the other, merely because upon an impartial consideration it appeareth to my own reason to be true in itself, abstracting entirely from the authority of him from whom I had it whether God or man.

By this the reader may be enabled to judge of the author's pretended regard for revelation. For the account he gives of it comes plainly to this : That we must not believe any doctrines to be true, because they are revealed from God to any other sent to ourselves, but we must believe them to be revealed from God, because we know them by our own reason to be true, by arguments drawn from the nature of the thing independent of the authority of revelation. And if we thus know them by our own reason to be true, we shall believe them whether they be supposed to have been immediately revealed by God or not. Which is in effect to say, that we are to receive nothing upon the credit of Divine Revelation at all, unless the revelation be immediately to ourselves ; and that the doctrines and laws delivered as by revelation from God, are entirely on the same foot of authority and evidence with those taught by the philosophers and others, who do not pretend to any immediate revelation. If those things were uncertain to our season before the revelation was published, they are so still, nor can the testimony or authority of that revelation give us any additional assurance concerning them. One, while he supposes that in the present state of mankind they need a revelation from God to ascertain them of several things of considerable use and importance ; and another while such a revelation cannot ascertain them of those things at all ; because, in judging of those things brought by revelation, they are to have no regard to the authority of that revelation as a reason for believing them ; but just to consider them as they lie before their own reason, and if they cannot prove them to be true from the reason and nature of the thing, independently of that revelation, they are not to believe them to be revealed at all.

The foundation of all this depends upon this principle, which he frequently repeats in several parts of his book,—that ‘moral truth’ or ‘righteousness’ and ‘fitness,’ is ‘the only infallible mark or criterion of divine truth,’ or of any doctrine as coming from God. He reduces all the proofs and evidences of religion to this alone, and represents it as a thing which ‘cannot be mistaken,’ p. 92. This is the design of the second and fifth of those principles which he tells were agreed upon among the gentlemen of their club as true and defensible against all the objections that could be urged against them, see pp. 8, 10.

It is not easy to form a distinct idea of what this writer means by ‘moral truth and righteousness,’ or by a thing’s appearing to the understanding to be morally true ; which he declares to be the only sure evidence and infallible criterion of divine truth, or of any doctrine as coming from God. The most natural meaning of this expression, ‘*moral truth*,’ seems to be this, that a moral truth is a truth relating to morality, or a proposition which truly affirms something concerning some moral *obligation*. So he seems to understand it, when he talks so often of the ‘doctrines and obligations of moral truth and righteousness.’ But will he not allow any doctrine to belong to religion that is not in this sense morally true ? This would discard several important principles even in

natural religion. For it is evident there are principles in religion of great consequence, distinct from the propositions immediately relating to the duties or precepts of it. The propositions and principles relating to the being, the attributes, and the providence of God, the immortality of the soul, and a future state, are not in this sense moral truths, that is, they do not directly and immediately affirm any moral duty or obligation, and yet I believe he will scarce deny that these things are of considerable importance in religion, and that we may have sufficient evidence of their being true.

Or does he mean by the moral truth and righteousness of doctrines that they have a good moral *tendency*; a tendency to promote the practice of morality and righteousness, and that this tendency is the only evidence of their truth? But neither can this be maintained. For though no doctrine is to be admitted into religion that is manifestly subversive of morality and righteousness, yet the good tendency of a principle or doctrine is not of itself alone a sufficient proof or evidence of the truth of that principle or doctrine. For many things might be mentioned which would have a good tendency supposing them to be true, but this alone would not prove them true. And the man would be ridiculous, that when required to prove or demonstrate the truth of them, would only attempt to show that if they were true they would tend to promote the practice of moral goodness, and that therefore this is a full proof and evidence that they are *actually* true. He would not be thought a very proper advocate for the existence of a God and a Providence, that should produce no other argument to prove them than that they are of a good moral tendency. The truth of these principles must be proved from other topics, and by other arguments, and then it will be a farther recommendation of them, and a great advantage, to show the good influence these principles must have upon mankind, and the practice of righteousness and virtue. All the peculiar doctrines of Christianity, where they are sincerely received and entertained, have a good effect on morality, and the practice of real holiness, and tend to strengthen and improve good affections and dispositions in the mind; and many good men have found it to be so in their own experience; but this alone is not the proper evidence of their truth. This must be proved by other arguments, and then their good tendency will be proper to show their usefulness and importance.

But after all he sometimes talks as if by the *moral* truth of doctrines and principles, he meant no more than the reasonableness of those doctrines, or the evidence of the doctrines arising from the reason of the thing. 'The moral truth, reason, and fitness of things,' and the 'moral truth, reasonableness, and fitness of the doctrines themselves,' are used by him as terms of the same signification, see pp. 10, 86, 94. Where by *moral truth* he seems to mean that which he calls the 'natural reasonableness and fitness of the thing,' and which he represents as a sufficient proof of its 'coming from God,' p. 84. And yet he there also distinguisheth

between the 'natural reasons' and 'moral fitnesses of things,' and allows each of these, *i. e.* the natural reasonableness and fitness of the thing, and its being morally true and fit, to be a proper sufficient evidence of its coming from God. Where he plainly sets up two criterions of divine truth, the *natural* and *moral truth* and fitness of the thing itself; and how this is consistent with what he so often affirms, that *moral truth* and fitness is the *only* evidence and criterion of *divine* truth, he would do well to explain. Indeed, it is hard to fix the idea of the word *moral* as used by this author and applied to truth. It seems only to be put in because it is a word of a good sound, and to make an appearance of saying something, whilst in reality, as he useth it, it serves only to perplex and confound the question concerning the proper evidence or proof of doctrines and principles. But that we may get out of this confusion, I shall take it as if he had said that the reasonableness of the doctrine itself appearing to the understanding is the only evidence of its being a 'divine truth,' or of its 'coming from God.' And here again it may be asked, what he means by a 'divine truth,' or a truth as 'coming from God?' Does he mean a truth that came by immediate revelation from God? So he ought to understand it if he would speak to the purpose; since the question, as he himself seems to put it, is concerning the proper proofs and evidences of a divine revelation; or how we may know that a doctrine is revealed from God. And according to this state of the case, the principle advanced by our author is to be understood thus; that a doctrine's being reasonable in itself, and appearing to our understanding to be true by arguments drawn from the nature and reason of the thing, is the only proof of its coming by immediate revelation from God. Whereas in reality this is no proof of its being thus revealed at all. For a thing may be very true and very reasonable in itself, and yet not have come by immediate revelation from God. So that to say, that this is the only proof or evidence of divine revelation, is to say, that there can be no proof of any doctrine as coming by immediate revelation from God at all. And this seems to be the author's intention. But is it not very odd to see him assume this all along without proving it, and argue from it as a principle that cannot be contested, when it is the very point in question?

Having thus endeavoured to detect the confusion and obscurity this writer attempts to throw upon the question relating to the way by which we may come to know that any thing is revealed by God, I shall now proceed to treat this matter more distinctly.

It is a principle here supposed (and which the author pretendeth not to contest) that a revelation from God may be of great use in the present corrupt and degenerate state of mankind, to direct men in true religion, and instruct them in things which it is of considerable importance for them to know. And this is what I have proved at large elsewhere.* Now supposing that God should in

* See Answer to 'Christianity as old as the Creation,' Vol. I. chap. v. vi.

his great goodness see fit to give an extraordinary revelation for the use of mankind, the most likely way of publishing that revelation for general use seems to be this : that God should first communicate the knowledge of his will by immediate inspiration to some person or persons, and then appoint or commission them to instruct mankind, and to communicate to others what they themselves received ; at the same time furnishing them with sufficient proofs or credentials, to convince others that they were indeed sent of God, and that what they thus deliver to the world in his name, is not their own invention, but that which they received by immediate revelation from God himself. It was in this method that the Christian Revelation was published to the world, the usefulness of which this writer would be thought to acknowledge.

There are two questions therefore to be distinctly considered. The one is, whether those to whom the original revelation is immediately made, may have a sufficient certainty that what they receive by immediate inspiration is indeed a revelation from God : the other is, whether other persons besides those to whom the original revelation was made, may have a sufficient ground of reasonable assurance, that what those persons published to the world as by revelation from God, is indeed a revelation from God, and is therefore to be received and submitted to as such.

As to the first question ; That God *can* communicate the knowledge of things by immediate revelation or inspiration in such a manner, that the person or persons to whom such a revelation is immediately made may be certain that it is indeed a revelation from God, cannot reasonably be denied. For it would be the most unreasonable and the most presumptuous thing in the world to say, That when one man hath a power of conveying his thoughts to another so as to make him sensible that it is he and no other person that speaks to him, God himself, the author of our natures, should have no way of communicating his will to his own creatures, so as to make them know that it is he that revealeth himself to them. Nor is it any objection against this, that we cannot distinctly explain or account for the way in which he doth it. We have little notion of the way in which spirits communicate their thoughts to one another, but must we therefore conclude that they have no way at all of doing it, because we cannot now comprehend or explain the manner of it, and because they have not the organs of bodily speech as we have ? No doubt they have far nobler and more perfect ways of communicating their ideas to one another, than one man hath of conveying his thoughts to another here on earth. And we may be sure that God hath a far nearer access to the human mind, and a far more intimate and effectual way of operating upon it, or exciting and impressing ideas there, than any created spirit can have ; or than one man can have of communicating his sentiments to another. Therefore, if it pleaseth him to communicate doctrines or laws to any person by immediate revelation, he can do it in such a manner, and with such an overpowering light and evidence, as to produce an absolute certainty in the

mind of that person, that those doctrines and laws are by revelation from him. Accordingly, this writer himself seems to acknowledge inspiration thus far, though it cannot well be reconciled to other passages in his book. As he makes 'immediate inspiration or revelation from God,' to be one way of communicating the knowledge of the doctrines and truths of religion to the mind, distinct from 'tradition and human testimony,' and from the common light of reason in the 'natural ordinary use of man's own faculties,' so he sometimes seems plainly to grant, that this may convey a certainty to the man himself that is thus immediately inspired, though he will not allow that the knowledge of such truth can go any farther upon divine authority, or as a matter of divine faith, than to the person or persons thus inspired, or to whom the original revelation is made, p. 82. And when he undertakes to state the question concerning the way in which we may know whether any law comes from God; he supposes that there are two ways in which there may be a 'rational proof given of a command or law from God;' the one is, 'where God himself speaks to the person immediately and directly,' the other is, 'where the moral reason or fitness of the thing is proposed or manifested to the person or persons concerned at the same time with the law or command,' p. 90. And he expressly saith, p. 84, 'If God speaks to me immediately and directly, I believe him upon his own authority.' Where he both owns that God may speak or communicate a thing to the mind *immediately and directly*, and that where he doth so, what is thus revealed is to be believed by the person to whom it is immediately communicated, upon his *authority*, that is, because he reveals it. He illustrates this by an instance, which he saith 'will come up exactly to the purpose.' He puts the case of a mathematical proposition, being communicated to one man by immediate revelation, to another man by its proper evidence, or by its being plainly demonstrated to him from the 'natural necessary relation and connexion of the ideas themselves.' And he saith that the one may be as certain of it as the other. He who hath it 'immediately revealed to him from God,' though we should suppose 'he knew nothing, and could know nothing of it as a truth necessarily founded in nature,' yet would be 'as certain of it' as he who received it upon the evidence of mathematical demonstration; 'because he would connect the certain truth of the proposition, with the necessary veracity of God:' though he could not communicate that certainty which he himself had to others; see pp. 82, 83. Here he seemeth plainly to assert that the person to whom God is pleased to make known a truth by way of immediate inspiration, may be certainly assured that God doth thus reveal it to him; and that in this case, though he doth not by his own reason apprehend the necessary connexion of the terms, or the natural fitness of the thing itself, he receiveth it upon the authority of God who reveals it: And that this authority or revelation from God affordeth a certainty to the mind equal to that arising from a mathematical demonstration. So that here he plainly supposeth, in direct contradiction to

what he elsewhere asserts, that the moral reason and fitness of the thing, as appearing to the mind, is not the *sole evidence* or *criterion* of a doctrine as coming from God; but that immediate revelation may be a just and certain ground of a person's believing a thing to be true, and to come from God, distinct from the apprehended reason and fitness of the thing itself: and that upon the authority of that revelation, the person to whom the revelation is originally and immediately made, may receive it as true and as coming from God, though the fitness of it in itself be not made evident to him by any reasons drawn from the nature of the thing. And if a thing's being revealed from God, be a sufficient ground of certainty to the person himself to whom the original revelation is immediately made, distinct from the proofs brought of its truth from the reason of the thing, then it must be so to others too in proportion to the assurance they have that it is a revelation from God. So that if there be any way of ascertaining others, besides those to whom the revelation is originally and immediately made, that any doctrine or law is by revelation from God, they are obliged to believe and receive it on that account, as of divine authority, though they cannot prove it to be necessarily true by arguments drawn from the reason of the thing independent of that authority.

This leads me to the second question that was proposed to be considered; with regard to which I lay down this proposition: That there may be such proofs and evidences given that the persons professing doctrines and laws from God for the use of mankind, were indeed sent and inspired by him, and did receive them by revelation from him; such proofs and evidences as make it reasonable for those to whom they are made known, to receive such laws and doctrines as of divine authority: in which case to refuse to believe those doctrines, and to submit to those laws, would be a very criminal conduct, and a manifest breach of the duty that reasonable creatures owe to the Supreme Being. This is the proper question in debate. For though this writer pretends not to deny that the persons to whom the original revelation is immediately made, may be certain that they themselves received it by immediate revelation from God himself, yet he denies that they have any way of proving to others that it is a revelation from God, except by proving the reasonableness of the thing itself: which is to say, that they have no way of proving to others that it came by divine revelation at all. For as I have already observed the reasonableness of a doctrine or law will never prove that the man that teacheth that doctrine, or bringeth that law, had it by immediate revelation from God. This must be proved, if it be proved at all, by other evidences.

It will be easily granted that persons being themselves persuaded that they have received any thing from God by immediate revelation, is not of itself a sufficient reason to others to engage them to receive it as such; and that if we had only their own words for it without any other proof, we could not take this for a proper evidence without laying ourselves open to the delusions of enthusiasts and impostors. The question then is, whether abstracting from the

credit and testimony of the persons themselves to whom the original revelation is made, there may not be proofs and evidences given sufficient to convince others that they were indeed sent of God, and that what they publish as from God, and in his name, is indeed a revelation from him.

Now let us suppose that a person professeth to have received doctrines and laws by revelation from God, for the instruction and direction of mankind, and that accordingly he urgeth men to believe those doctrines, and submit to those laws as of divine authority. And let us suppose that such person appeareth as far as can be judged from his whole conduct, to be one of great probity and sincerity, animated with a hearty zeal for the glory of God, and the good of mankind: and also that the doctrines he teacheth, and the laws he giveth as from God, have nothing in them contrary to true piety and virtue, but rather have a tendency to promote it. This forms a strong prejudice in his favour, but doth not alone prove that he received those doctrines and laws by revelation from God himself. But if that person is farther enabled, as a testimony of his divine mission, to perform works of so wonderful a nature, so grand, so glorious, as manifestly and undeniably transcend all the power and skill of any man or all the men upon earth, and therefore evidently argue a supernatural interposition; and if this is done not merely in a single instance or two, in which case let the fact be ever so extraordinary and above all the power of man, yet it might be suspected that it was only some strange thing that had happened without a particular view to the establishment of any doctrines or laws:—I say, let us suppose a marvellous concurrence of many such amazing and extraordinary acts of power and dominion, of such a kind as naturally and almost unavoidably lead us to consider them as proceeding from the sovereign Lord and Governor of the world, and of mankind; and that for a course of years together, all plainly wrought in attestation and evidence of that person's divine mission, and in confirmation of that scheme of doctrines and laws which he delivered to the world as from God, and without ever being controlled or overruled by any superior evidence; I think it is very reasonable in such a case to regard him as sent of God, and to receive the doctrines and laws he delivereth in the name of God, and which come to us thus attested and confirmed, as the doctrines and laws of God. For supposing those miracles to be of such a nature, and so circumstanced, as that either none but God can do them, or at least to be such that it can never be supposed, that a wise and good Providence would suffer them to be done in attestation of an imposture,* the doing such miracles in

* I will grant, that God is not obliged, by his providence, to hinder every thing that may in fact seduce men from the truth. He is not obliged to hinder cunning impostors from employing their arts of subtlety to deceive, or to hinder evil beings from attempting to seduce mankind, or from sometimes doing things that may appear strange and miraculous. But this I say, that there may be miracles supposed of such a nature, and so circumstanced, and which carry in them such glorious indications of a divine power and dominion, that it cannot reasonably be reconciled to the notion of an infinitely wise and good Mind presiding over the affairs of men, to suppose that they should be suffered

proof of such doctrines and laws, is really a divine testimony to those doctrines and laws as coming from God. And in every such case we cannot be said to receive the doctrines and laws thus attested and confirmed upon the word of men, or upon the sole credit and authority of the person professing to be extraordinarily sent and inspired, but we receive them upon the testimony and authority of God himself. And supposing God in his great goodness to have really designed to give an extraordinary revelation of doctrines and laws for the use of mankind, and to send a person or persons to publish them in his name, it is scarce possible to conceive what stronger proofs could be given of the divine mission of that person or persons, and the divine authority of such doctrines and laws, than such a series and succession of glorious uncontrolled miracles, as we are now supposing.

But the force of this will more fully appear when particularly applied to the miracles that were done at the first establishment of the Jewish dispensation.

Let us suppose that the miracles were really wrought that are recorded to have been wrought by Moses, the question is whether those miracles and wonderful works which he performed were a sufficient proof of his divine mission, and made it reasonable for them that saw those miracles to receive the doctrines and laws he published as from God. And I think, a bare representation of them would go a great way to determine this question. It is evident, that supposing the amazing and stupendous works done by the ministry of Moses in Egypt, at the Red Sea, and in the Wilderness, the promulgation of the law at Sinai, the feeding the people with manna for forty years together, &c., and the signal judgments inflicted on those that opposed his authority and laws; supposing these things to have been really done as they are represented, they were far above all the power of man, and seemed to argue such a dominion over nature as is proper to the supreme universal Lord. And it is also evident that the Being, in whose name and by whose power these things were done, who gave these laws, and brought the Israelites out of Egypt, all along assumed the character and peculiar prerogatives of the supreme God, the independent Jehovah, and claimed their highest love, reverence, adoration, and obedience to himself alone, in exclusion of all other deities. To suppose that he who gave forth those laws, by whose power these great and astonishing things were effected, was an evil being, would be the greatest of absurdities. Can it be thought that a wise and good God would thus suffer an evil being to assume his character, and set up for the Creator and Lord of the

to be wrought in attestation of an imposture, especially for a succession of years together, without ever being controlled by superior miracles, or contrary evidence. So that the question here doth not properly proceed concerning all miracles in general, whether all kinds of miracles are proofs of doctrines as coming from God: but whether miracles may not be of such a nature, and so circumstanced, for number, grandeur, and continuance, as to yield a sufficient attestation to the divine mission of the persons by whom, and to the divine original of the doctrines in confirmation of which, they were wrought: and particularly whether the miracles wrought in confirmation of the Mosaic and Christian dispensation were not such.

universe, and require to be acknowledged and adored as such, and to confirm this his claim by such a series of the most glorious and stupendous works as must almost unavoidably lead all that beheld them to acknowledge a divine hand, and not only to give forth laws with the most amazing solemnity in the name of the universal Lord, but to inflict the most awful judgments upon those that refused to submit to those laws, and acknowledge him as their Lord; and thus bring them under a kind of necessity of being deluded, or submitting to the falsely usurped authority? Can we think that the Supreme Being would look on all the while with indifference, and suffer an evil being thus to personate him, and to abuse and deceive his creatures, and take no care, by any superior miracles or contrary evidence, to overrule and detect the imposture? This appears to me to be absolutely inconsistent with all the notions of a wise and good providence presiding over the world, and the affairs of mankind. It is not to be accounted for upon any other supposition than that of an almighty evil principle, acting independently of the good God, and not at all under his control.

But if this cannot be supposed without the greatest absurdity, then it must be said, that it was God himself immediately, or which comes to the same thing, by the agency of subordinate good beings superior to man, acting under him as his instruments, and according to his will, that wrought those wonderful works in attestation of Moses's divine mission, and the laws he gave in the name of God. And then I think it cannot be denied, that those laws thus attested were to be received as coming from God, and to have refused to submit to them in these circumstances, and after all these glorious attestations would have been to rebel against God, and to resist the divine authority: and consequently would have been a very unjustifiable and criminal conduct, highly displeasing to the Supreme Being. And those who upon the credit of such illustrious attestations believed his divine mission, and received the revelation he brought, and the laws he gave, as from God, could not in that case be said to believe him merely upon his own word, or to receive those doctrines and laws upon his sole credit and authority, but upon a divine testimony, and upon the authority of God.

The argument is still stronger when applied to the miracles wrought by Christ and his apostles. Let us suppose that the facts as represented in the gospel are true, concerning Christ's healing the most obstinate and incurable diseases, of many years' continuance, in an instant; restoring the blind and lame, casting out devils, commanding the winds and the sea, feeding five thousand at once with five loaves and two fishes, and even raising the dead; but especially his own resurrection from the dead, ascension into heaven, and the consequent effusion of the Holy Ghost in his extraordinary gifts and powers, whereby his disciples were enabled to perform the most astonishing miracles like to those which he himself had performed whilst on earth: and all these things done in a vast variety of instances, and for a long course of years together in his name, and in attestation of his divine mission, and the scheme of laws and doc-

trines he introduced: I say, supposing all these things to have been really done as they are recorded in the New Testament, I think they form the strongest proof that can be supposed in favour of the doctrines and laws so attested. They evidently transcended all human power and skill, and must therefore have been wrought by the assistance and power of a superior being or beings. And this could not be an evil being: not only because many of the works themselves are of such a nature, that it can scarcely be supposed that an evil being could have it in his power or inclination to perform them: but because it can hardly be thought that the wise and righteous Governor of the world would suffer an evil being or beings, to give such a series of glorious attestations bearing the illustrious characters of divinity upon them, in favour of doctrines and laws falsely pretended to be given by him, without ever controlling or overruling them by any superior evidence: and lastly, because it would be to the last degree absurd, to imagine that an evil being should ever exert his power in such an extraordinary manner to confirm a revelation pretending to come from God, the principal design and manifest tendency of which was to recover men from idolatry, vice and wickedness, to the knowledge and love of God, and the practice of piety, righteousness, and virtue. It followeth, therefore, that they must have been wrought by the immediate agency of God himself, or by some good being or beings superior to man, acting under him, and by his direction and influence. And this being the case, either it must be said that the person in attestation of whose divine mission all these marvellous things were done, was indeed, as he professed himself to be, extraordinarily sent of God, and that the scheme of religion, that is, of doctrines and laws, in confirmation of which they were wrought, was indeed true and of divine authority: or it must be said that God himself gave his own power, or good beings acting under his direction lent their assistance, and that in a series of the most astonishing instances, and for a succession of years together, to give testimony to a falsehood and imposture, and to put a cheat upon mankind in the name of God. A supposition which is not consistent with the belief of a God and a providence.

Thus I think it appeareth, that miracles may be supposed of such a nature, and so circumstanced, as to afford a sufficient attestation to the divine mission of the person in favour of whom, and to the truth and divine original of the doctrines and laws in confirmation of which, they were wrought. And that particularly, supposing the things to have been really done, that are recorded to have been done at the first establishment of the Jewish and Christian dispensation, they yielded a full attestation to the divine mission of Moses and our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the scheme or system of doctrines and laws published in the name of God. The evidence was not put upon a single wonder or two, however extraordinary and glorious, but there was a marvellous series and succession of wonderful acts and supernatural attestations to strengthen the evidence, and put it beyond all reasonable doubt. For all the

miracles done not only by Moses, but the succeeding prophets, centred in proving his divine mission, and the authority of the laws he gave as from God; since all the subsequent revelations by the prophets in the Old Testament still supposed the authority of the law of Moses, and gave an additional attestation to it. And in like manner all the miracles done by Christ himself, and by his apostles and disciples after him, had one main view to which they were all directed, that is, to confirm the divine mission of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the truth and divine authority of the doctrines and laws which he introduced; so that each of these schemes of revelation was confirmed by a series of the most illustrious attestations. And besides this, each of them gave testimony to the other. Moses and the prophets foretold the coming and glory of Christ, and the new dispensation he was to introduce, and prepared the world for it. And Jesus confirmed by his testimony the divine mission of Moses and the prophets. So that in this view, all the attestations given to both, really contributed to confirm the divine original and authority of each of them. And all together form an evidence so great and so strong, the like of which cannot possibly be produced in favour of any other system of doctrines and laws, and which it cannot reasonably be supposed could ever have been given, or that a wise and good providence would have suffered it to be given, to an imposture.

I shall now proceed to consider what this writer objects against the proof from miracles. What he offers on this head is of no great weight, though advanced with an uncommon air of confidence. He urges that 'there will be always two very strong objections against such an argument as this when applied to religion. First, that it would be a hard matter to prove the thing as unexceptionably true in fact, or that the first report and belief of it did not arise from ignorance, presumption, prejudice, &c. And in the next place, that no consequence can be drawn from any such thing, supposing it ever so true, and clearly proved in fact,' p. 345. As to the first, I do not see but miracles, supposing them to be facts obvious to the senses, done in open view, and even in the view of enemies themselves concerned and zealous to detect an imposture, are as capable of being proved as any other facts whatsoever: and that both those that at first were eye-witnesses to them might be as sure of them as men can be of any thing which they themselves hear and see, and for which they have the testimony of their senses; and those that have the accounts transmitted to them, may have them transmitted in such a manner, and with such evidence, that it would be an unreasonable incredulity to doubt of them. This must be allowed, unless men are resolved not to believe any accounts of facts done in former ages. And it might be easily shown, and hath been often proved, that the miracles done at the first establishment of the Mosaical and Christian dispensation were of this kind. As to what he adds, and which is the only present question, that supposing the facts ever so true, no consequence can be drawn from them in favour of any religion, the reasons he there offers are very weak.

The first is, that it is certain that the being and moral perfections of God, and the natural relations of man to him as his reasonable creature, and a subject of his moral government, cannot depend upon the truth or falsehood of any historical facts, or upon our forming a right or wrong judgment concerning them. This is very oddly expressed. Nobody pretends that the being of a God, or the natural relations between him and us, depend upon miracles. But a revelation from God, containing a clearer discovery of his glorious perfections, of his nature and will, and of the obligations incumbent upon us towards him, &c., may be attested by miracles in such a manner as to give the world convincing proofs that it is indeed a true divine revelation, and to be depended on as such. And then, upon the credit of that revelation, we may come to know several things relating to these subjects, which we could not have known at all, or not with certainty without it. The second reason he there offers is, that he hath already proved, that the characteristic of moral truth and righteousness is the only sure mark or criterion of any doctrine or practice as coming from God, and divinely authorized. I do not know in what part of his book he hath proved this, except we take strong assertions for proofs. But this pretence hath been examined already; and is in effect no more than a confident affirming that there can be no external proofs of divine revelation, which is the very point in question.

But there are some other things he offers to invalidate the proof from miracles. He asserts that 'it is plain, that the power of working miracles had no connexion with the truth of the doctrines taught by such miracle-workers, because false prophets, and the most wicked seducers, might and did work miracles, which they could not have done, had miracles been any evidence or proof of truth and sound doctrine.' p. 81. This he hath over again, p. 98, where he urges, that 'False prophets, and the most wicked seducers, and even the devil himself, may work miracles; and therefore, miracles alone considered can prove nothing at all, and ought to have no weight or influence with anybody.'*

But if there may be miracles of such a nature, and so circumstanced, that no seducer can ever equal them, and it cannot be supposed they could ever be done, or at least that God would suffer them to be done, in attestation of an imposture, then the evidence from such miracles, so circumstanced, still holds good, notwithstanding what this writer here offers to the contrary. And this hath been already shown with regard to the miracles wrought in confirmation of the Jewish and Christian dispensation. I will grant that seducers may, by human art and skill, be supposed to do things that appear very strange and unaccountable, and set the people a wondering; and that they may do yet stranger things, supposing the agency and assistance of evil spirits; but still we may be sure, from the wisdom and goodness of Divine Providence,

* See this objection more fully considered, 'Answer to Christianity as old as the Creation,' Part II. from p. 72 to 92.

that the miracles wrought by the assistance of his Spirit, and in confirmation of a revelation which he gives to mankind, shall be of such a nature, as shall in their number, their grandeur, and continuance, beyond all comparison transcend whatever were or shall be wrought in favour of any imposture. There have been two systems of doctrines and laws really given by divine revelation, the Mosaical and the Christian; and God took care, in his great wisdom and goodness, that each of them should be attended with such an abundance of extraordinary attestations, as no imposture was ever attended with, and no skill or power of deceivers could ever effect.

Moses indeed makes a supposition of a false prophet's working a sign or wonder to seduce the people from the worship of the true God, and warns them in that case not to regard him, nor to suffer themselves to be deceived by him. This is a strong way of putting a case, to show that on no account whatsoever they should suffer themselves to be drawn into idolatry. But certainly he never did suppose that any false prophet should be able to produce such a series of miraculous attestation, in confirmation of any false doctrine or idolatrous worship, as could in any wise come in competition with those which were wrought at the establishment and for confirmation of the laws, which he gave them in the name of God. On the contrary, he all along supposes that as there was no God save the Lord, so neither were there any works to be compared to his works; and he appeals to these works as the manifest proofs of his unequalled sovereignty and glory, and of the divine original and authority of that law which they were designed to confirm and to establish.

Under the New Testament our Saviour speaks of false prophets, and false Christs, that should arise, and show great signs and wonders. Matt. xxiv. 5, 6, 24. This plainly relates to the false prophets and seducers that arose among the Jews, a little before the destruction of Jerusalem, whom Josephus represents as magicians and sorcerers, or jugglers, [*μάγοι καὶ γοητὲς*] and who, he tells us, pretended to divine inspiration, and promised the people to do wonderful things for them. But it is certain, none of their pretended wonders could in any wise be compared to those which our Saviour himself (the true Messiah) wrought. Nor could he intend by these words to signify, that they would do as great things as he himself had done, since he so often appeals to his wonderful works, as the uncontested proofs of his divine mission. So he saith, John v. 36. 'The works which my Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me.' And John x. 37, 38: 'If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not; but if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works, that ye may know and believe that the Father is in me, and I in him.' And again, John xv. 24: 'If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin.' And John x. 24, 25: 'When the Jews said unto him, If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly:' Jesus answered them; I told you,

and ye believed not; the works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me.' See also John xiv. 11. From hence St. Peter represents Jesus of Nazareth as approved of God, [ἀποδεικνύμενον] demonstrated, as the word properly signifies, by miracles, and signs, which God did by him in the midst of them; Acts ii. 22. It could never therefore be our Saviour's design to signify that any of the false prophets and seducers among the Jews, should do miracles that could in any measure be compared to his own. And it is certain, in fact, that they did not: they pretended to foretel things to come, and the event soon confuted them, and showed the vanity of their pretences. They pretended to do great wonders, but they might properly be called *lying wonders*. For though they had the art of seducing great numbers of people, they and their works soon perished, and the falsehood and imposture of them soon appeared.

As to what the author supposeth concerning the apostles opposing miracles to miracles, in confirmation of their different schemes of Christianity, this shall be considered afterwards, when I come to examine his objections against the New Testament. At present I shall only say that it may be proved with the clearest evidence, that the apostles of our Lord taught one and the same uniform harmonious scheme of doctrines, the same gospel to which God 'bore witness with signs and wonders, and divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost:' and that the false teachers in that age could never produce anything in attestation of their false doctrines, that could in the least be compared to the illustrious evidences and proofs brought by the apostles to confirm the gospel which they preached.

Another thing he offers to show that miracles can be no proof, is this, that the 'power of working miracles did not make the workers of them either infallible, or impeccable; raise them above the possibility of being deceived themselves in their inward judgment, or of deceiving others in the outward sentence and declaration of that judgment.* pp. 80, 83, 93. But it appears that the proof or evidence from miracles, as already stated, hath not properly anything to do with the fallibility or infallibility, the peccability or impeccability, of the person in himself considered, by whom these miracles are wrought. For in that case, the credit of his having received a revelation from God doth not merely depend upon his own word, or veracity, or integrity; upon which suppo-

* Our author, when he here speaks of the *power of working miracles*, seems to have a particular reference to the gift of miracles communicated by the Holy Ghost, in the first age of Christianity; which he understands as if it were a permanent habit residing in the person, to be used at pleasure, whenever he thought fit, like a natural faculty or habit; which therefore might be used by him, either for confirming truth or falsehood. But this is a very great mistake: that power of working miracles was not a power of doing them whenever the persons themselves pleased. They could then only work miracles, when it seemed fit to the divine wisdom they should do them for valuable ends. And it cannot be supposed that God who gave them this power on purpose to confirm the truth, would enable them to exercise it to confirm a falsehood. But concerning this, see below, chap. xiii. where this is more largely considered.

sition it might be said, that the word of fallible and peccable men was not entirely to be depended on ; but it depends upon a real proof, distinct from his word, and independent of it, viz. upon the testimony given by God himself, to his divine mission and inspiration, and to the laws he publisheth to the world in his name. And we may be sure, that however fallible men are in themselves, yet if God sends them on purpose to deliver doctrines and laws to mankind, as by revelation from him, and enables them, in confirmation of them, to perform such a series of illustrious miracles as we are now supposing, he will also assist them in communicating those doctrines and laws, so as to preserve them from error in delivering them.

This will appear in a just light, if applied to the cases already mentioned. Moses professed to be extraordinarily sent of God, and to have received laws by revelation from him, which laws he delivered to the people in his name. In confirmation of this his mission, he performed a number of the most extraordinary miracles, for a succession of years together, of such a nature, and so circumstanced, that they bore upon them the evident characters of a divine interposition, and could never be supposed to have been done, or that God would suffer them to be done, in favour of an imposture. Now this being the case, it is nothing to the purpose, whether we suppose Moses to have been fallible and peccable in himself or not. Let us grant him to have been in himself fallible, or capable of being deceived and imposed upon : yet we have a sufficient assurance that he was not actually deceived in this case. If by an enthusiastic heat he had only imagined himself to be inspired, and to have received those laws by immediate revelation from God, this conceit of his would never have enabled him to perform such a series of the most stupendous works above all the art of man, or power of enthusiasm. And his doing such things manifestly proved that his divine mission was not the delusion of his own misguided imagination, but a glorious reality : and that he did not merely fancy himself sent and inspired of God, but that he really was so.

Again, let us suppose that he was *peccable*, that is, that he was capable of forming a design to deceive the people, and of putting his own inventions upon them for divine revelation (though I think Moses's excellent character will scarce suffer us to suppose that he was capable of carrying on a deliberate solemn cheat and imposture, in the name of God himself ; but let us suppose him to have been capable of such a design), yet it is evident that in this case he did not impose upon them, and that the laws he gave them, as from God, and in his name, were indeed the laws of God, and not merely his own inventions ; because God himself, in the manner already mentioned, bore witness to those laws. And whatever designs Moses might be capable of, yet God himself, or good beings superior to man, acting under his influence and direction, by whose assistance alone works so circumstanced could be done, would never have joined with him on carrying on the imposture, and giving at-

testation to a lie. And this way of reasoning may be urged with still greater force when applied to the revelation brought by our Lord Jesus Christ and his apostles. Whereas, therefore, this writer frequently argues, that we cannot take miracles for a 'proof or evidence of doctrines without exposing ourselves to all the enthusiasm and imposture in the world,' it is manifest that we can run no hazard of this by receiving doctrines and laws as coming from God, that have been confirmed by such a series of extraordinary miraculous attestations as were those given to the Mosaical and Christian revelation. Because they were of such a nature, and so circumstanced, as no imposture was ever attended with, and no art of deceivers, or power of enthusiasm can ever effect. Such a revelation once given, and so gloriously attested, where it is steadily believed and adhered to, is one of the best preservatives against being led astray by the deceptions of enthusiasts and impostors.

What our author offers to show that miracles can be no proof of positive precepts, though produced with great pomp (for he pretends to state the question with greater accuracy than hath been hitherto done, and tells us that the question is not concerning God's right of instituting such precepts which he doth not deny, but concerning the way of knowing when God gives such commands, see p. 87, &c. I say, the force of all that he offers on this head) depends entirely upon what he so often asserts, but never proves, viz. that moral truth and fitness is the *only* proof and evidence of any doctrine or law, as coming from God: from whence he argues, that precepts concerning matters of a ritual and positive nature cannot be proved to come from God, as not being necessarily founded in the nature and fitness of things. He therefore compares such commands to commands pretended to be sent from parents or masters to their children or servants, but which do not come to them under their own hand and seal, and may for that reason be disregarded. But if we must keep to the author's comparison, why may not God's giving us laws by persons whom he hath sent and authorized for that purpose, and to whom he hath given sufficient credentials, by confirming the message they bring by numerous uncontrolled miracles; why may not this be compared to a parent or master's sending directions or orders to his children and servants, by messengers under his own hand and seal, in which case he allows that they are obliged to conform to those orders though they do not know the particular reasons of them? Yea, miracles may be supposed to be of such a nature, that the proof arising from them may be stronger than what ariseth merely from a man's own hand and seal. For it is possible that a man's hand and seal may be so exactly counterfeited that no person upon comparing them may be able to discern the difference between the genuine and the counterfeit, not even the person himself whose hand is counterfeited, any farther than that by other means he may know that he did not write it, and that he gave no such orders. But miracles may be supposed of such a nature, and so circumstanced, and raised so far have all competition and parallel, that no deceivers can work the

like, nor have been ever able, or can be supposed to be able so to imitate them, but that upon carefully examining and comparing them, we may easily see a vast difference. If, therefore, a man's giving orders under his own hand and seal be allowed to be a sufficient notification of his will and pleasure, and maketh it reasonable for his children and servants to obey those orders, though it is not impossible they may be counterfeited; then the command of God coming to us, confirmed with the attestation of miracles of such a nature as no imposture was ever attended with (and such I have shown were the miracles wrought at the establishment of the Jewish and Christian dispensation) is a sufficient ground for our yielding obedience to such commands. And our not apprehending the things required to be in themselves antecedently necessary in their own nature, cannot be a sufficient reason for our rejecting them; because, upon this supposition, they come to us upon the authority or testimony of God himself, who by the author's own concession hath a right of commanding us in things of a positive nature.

It ought to be observed, that at the same time that this writer doth all he can to show that miracles can be no proof at all of any doctrine or revelation at all as coming from God, he would not be thought to insinuate that miracles are of no use, and can serve to no purpose at all in religion. He saith 'that miracles, especially if wrought for the good of mankind, and with a visible regard for their interest and happiness, are perhaps the most effectual means of removing prejudices and procuring attention to what is delivered,' pp. 98, 99. But I do not see how this can be made to consist upon his scheme. If it be supposed that miracles can in any case be so circumstanced as to yield a sufficient attestation to the divine mission of the person who is enabled to work these miracles, and to the truth and divinity of the doctrines and precepts that are confirmed by these miracles; then when I see a person performing such extraordinary works, above all the power of man, this will naturally command and engage my attention to what he delivers. But if it be supposed that they can never be of such a nature and so circumstanced as to give any attestation to the divine mission of any person, or to the truth and divine original of any doctrine, I can see no reason why I should attend to a doctrine more for being accompanied with miracles, than if it were not so, or why I should concern myself about miracles at all; because, if ever so true or good, they can give no attestation, and furnish no proof; or, as this writer expresseth it, 'can prove nothing at all, and ought to have no weight or influence with any body.'

All the use he is pleased to assign for the miracles wrought by Christ and his apostles is, that 'they tended to convince the people that they were no enemies to God, and to their country, and disposed them coolly and soberly to consider the nature and tendency of the doctrines they had to propose to them;' but that they were not designed for a proof of the truth or divinity of those doctrines, see p. 98.

But does not our Saviour himself frequently and plainly appeal to the

wonderful works he wrought as the proper evidences of his divine mission, and as bearing witness to him and to his doctrine? Does not he often expressly put the proof upon this, and suppose it to be a proof so strong as would leave the Jews utterly inexcusable if they did not believe him? And the effect these miracles properly had upon those that attended to them is well expressed by Nicodemus, 'We know that thou art a teacher sent from God; for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him,' John iii. 2. Nor had the Pharisees any other way of avoiding the force of this, than by saying that he did his miracles by the assistance of the devil: a blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, [which our Saviour pronounces never to be forgiven, as being the most obstinate and malicious opposition to divine truth, and a resisting the utmost evidence.

This may be sufficient to show what assurance those who themselves were witnesses to such a series of miraculous attestations might have of that doctrine or law coming from God, which they beheld thus attested and confirmed. But there is another thing that deserves to be considered, and that is, what reasonable ground of assurance they may also have of a doctrine or law coming from God, who did not themselves see those miracles whereby it was attested and confirmed, or did not live in the age when those miracles were wrought. Can it be reasonable for such to receive doctrines and laws as of divine authority, upon the evidence of miracles which they themselves were not eye witnesses of? In answer to this, I think it cannot be reasonably denied, that supposing miracles may be so circumstanced as to be in themselves a sufficient proof to those that saw them, then they are also a sufficient proof to others, in proportion to the assurance they have that those miracles were really done. So that the question is reduced to this: whether there may be such evidence given of miracles done in former ages as make it reasonable for those that live in succeeding ages to believe, and be persuaded that those miracles were wrought? For if so, then, supposing miracles to be a proof, they are obliged to believe that the doctrines and laws which were attested by these miracles came originally by revelation from God, and are to be received as of divine authority. Now this depends upon another question, and that is, whether in any case we can have sufficient assurance of facts which we ourselves did not see, or which were done in former ages? It is not sufficient to prove things uncertain, and not to be depended upon, to say that we have them by *human* tradition and testimony, that is, by the testimony of men that are neither infallible nor impeccable. For human tradition and testimony may be so circumstanced as to yield sufficient assurance that those facts were done in past ages, or such laws enacted: and therefore the man that should doubt of them, and give no other reason for his doubting, or rejecting them but this, that they came from human tradition and testimony, would only render himself ridiculous.

This author, to show the insufficiency of tradition for conveying

doctrines and laws of religion, is pleased to compare it to a parent or master's writing 'to another person, and he to a third, and the third to a fourth, and so on to the hundredth or thousandth hand, which orders were at last come to his family, about something of near interest and concern between him and them. In this case it is said that children and servants would not be justly blamed if they should 'suspend their obedience till they heard from him in a more direct and unexceptionable way,' pp. 88, 89. But this instance doth not at all come up to the point. The case should be put thus, supposing laws to have been enacted in former ages, and those laws committed to writing, the question is, whether those laws may not be transmitted to posterity with such evidence, that we may have assurance sufficient to convince any reasonable person that those laws were really enacted, and that these are the very laws? And whether it would be esteemed a good reason, or accepted as a proper excuse for doubting of the authority of those laws, or refusing obedience to them, that we ourselves did not *live* in the age when those laws were made; and that they are transmitted to us through the hands of persons capable of an intention to deceive us, or of being themselves deceived. Again, supposing facts to have been done in former ages of considerable importance, and those facts recorded at the time in which they were done, the question is, whether they may not be transmitted to us in authentic *records*, with such evidence that it would be perfectly unreasonable to doubt of them; and whether it would diminish the credit of them, that the writings which contain an account of those facts have been spread through many hands, often transcribed, dispersed among different nations, and translated into various languages? One would think, by our author's manner of representing it, that he intended to insinuate that this would render the accounts uncertain; whereas there being many copies of them is a much greater security than if there were but a few extant.

It cannot be denied, that laws had originally from Revelation, are as capable of being transmitted to posterity as any other laws; and miraculous *facts*, done in attestation of those laws, may be of such a nature, and so circumstanced, as to be capable of being transmitted to succeeding ages as well as any other facts. If, therefore, it be allowed that any laws or facts may be so transmitted, that those who live in after ages may have a reasonable assurance, sufficient to convince them that these are the very laws which were enacted, and that these facts were really done; then it must also be allowed that the laws which came originally by Revelation, and the facts whereby those laws were attested and confirmed, may be transmitted to us in such a manner, and with such a degree of evidence, that we cannot reasonably doubt of their being the very laws which were originally published by revelation from God, and that those miraculous facts were really wrought. If we refuse to receive those laws or believe those facts, because we ourselves did not see them, or live in the age when the laws were first given, and the facts were done, though they come to us transmitted with such

evidence as we ourselves would count sufficient in any other case ; this is certainly a most unreasonable conduct, and will hardly be justified to the great Governor of the world. To insist upon it, that those laws should be again promulgated in the manner in which they were published at first, and that the extraordinary miraculous facts wrought in attestation of them, should be done over again in every age, and in every nation, for the satisfaction of every single person (for one man in one age and one country hath as much right to expect and demand it in another) would be a most absurd demand ; it would be unbecoming the divine wisdom to grant them ; and indeed, such extraordinary attestations, by being continually repeated, would cease to be extraordinary, and be regarded no more than common things, and so would lose their force. It is enough that they are transmitted to us in such a manner, and with such evidence that it would be perfectly unreasonable to doubt whether these are the very laws that were originally given as from God, and whether these facts were really done. And it might easily be proved, and hath been often shown, that the Scripture laws and doctrines, and the facts whereby they were attested and confirmed, are transmitted to us with an evidence that scarce any other laws, or any other facts done in former ages were ever attended with.*

Our author himself does not deny, that ‘ a matter of revelation is as capable of being conveyed down to posterity as any other matter of fact, of what nature or kind soever, and that either this must be allowed, or we must reject all historical evidence of every other kind.’ And then he saith, that he must still insist upon it, that ‘ no reason or proof can be given of any revelation as coming from God, but the moral fitness and reasonableness of the thing itself, in its own nature, antecedent to, and abstracted from, any such tradition or human testimony ; and consequently, that tradition or human testimony is here brought in, to no manner of purpose and without effect,’ p. 85. This writer often puts me in mind of what he is pleased to say, concerning the ‘ common run of our enthusiastic pulpiteers, whose manner,’ he tells us, it ‘ is always first to beg the main point in question, and then triumph upon it as a thing proved,’ p. 88. This is the manner of our author, who repeats it on all occasions that moral truth and fitness is the only *evidence* or *proof* of any doctrine or law as coming from God ; and without offering any argument to prove it, but only supposing it, makes use of this all along as a demonstration that miracles can be no proof or evidence of the divine original of any doctrine or law. And if you will but grant him that the other is the *only* proof, then he will easily show that this is not a proof. But since it hath been shown that miracles may be of such a nature as to yield a sufficient proof of the divine original and authority of doctrines and laws attested and confirmed by those miracles ; then if

* See to this purpose, Answer to Christianity as old as the Creation, Part II. chap. iv. v. vi.

human tradition and testimony may give us a reasonable and sufficient assurance that those miracles were really wrought, it is evident that it is here brought in to very good purpose. And that human tradition may be so circumstanced as to give sufficient assurance that these miracles were really wrought, is as true as that human tradition can give us a sufficient assurance of any past facts; nor can this be reasonably denied, except upon this principle, that no past facts can be transmitted to us with sufficient evidence for a reasonable man to depend upon. A thing which the enemies of Revelation have not yet ventured to assert.

All the use he is pleased to allow to tradition or human testimony in matters of religion is this, 'That we may be probably assured from tradition and human testimony what our fore-fathers believed about God and religion, and what reasons they assigned for it; but whether they ought to have believed as they did, or whether their reasons will hold good or not, is another question, concerning which tradition or human testimony can never inform us,' p. 85. Let us, therefore, proceed upon his own state of the case. I am not to believe any religion to be true and divine, merely because my ancestors believed it; but if I know what the grounds were upon which they believed it, and am satisfied that the grounds were just, then I am obliged to believe it upon those grounds as well as they were. And supposing the grounds upon which it was first received and submitted to as of divine authority, were, besides the good tendency of its doctrines and laws, the illustrious miraculous attestations whereby it was confirmed, tradition may give me a sufficient assurance to satisfy any reasonable mind of the truth of those extraordinary miraculous facts, or that those facts were really done. And this is all that tradition or human testimony is properly brought for. For whether those facts were a sufficient proof of the divine authority of the revelation attested and confirmed by them, must be judged not by *tradition* but by our own *reason*, upon considering the nature and circumstances of those facts and attestations. And if our own reason convinceth us that those facts, supposing them true, were proper and sufficient attestations to the divine original of that revelation, and if also we have all the proof that can be reasonably desired that the facts are true, then we are obliged to receive that revelation as coming from God, and as of divine authority. And indeed the proof of those facts is so strong, they are transmitted to us with such convincing evidence, that I am persuaded few resist the argument taken from the facts in favour of Christianity, but who would have been among the unbelieving, had they lived in the very age in which those facts were done. For the true reason of their not believing, is not that there is not sufficient proof of those facts to convince and satisfy a reasonable mind, and such as is esteemed sufficient in any other case; but it is owing to certain prejudices and dispositions of mind, which probably would have hindered their submitting to the evidence brought for the Christian Revelation, had they themselves been eye-witnesses to the facts. And we may well reckon our author one of this make

and disposition of mind, since he takes care to let us know that he looks upon miracles to be *no* proofs at all, and therefore would not have been moved by them, though he had seen them done before his eyes.

This writer is pleased positively to insist upon it, 'That there can be no such thing as divine faith upon human testimony; and that this absurd supposition has been the ground of all the superstition and false religion in the world. And that the knowledge of any truth can go no farther upon divine authority, or as a matter of divine faith, than to the person or persons immediately inspired, or to whom the original revelation was made.' pp. 82, 84.

But if, by 'divine faith upon human testimony,' be only meant, that an original divine revelation may be transmitted or conveyed to us by human testimony, together with the extraordinary miraculous facts whereby it was attested and confirmed, and that in such a manner as to make it reasonable for us to believe that it is indeed a divine revelation, this hath been already shown. And if I have sufficient grounds of reasonable assurance concerning any doctrines and laws, that they came originally by divine revelation, I am as truly obliged to regard them as coming from God, and to believe and obey them on that account, as if I had them myself, by immediate inspiration. For the obligation to believe and obey them doth not depend upon the particular way of my receiving them, but upon my having sufficient to convince me that they came from God. This writer indeed seems resolved that whatever arguments can be brought to prove that any thing is a divine revelation, the receiving it as such shall not be called 'divine faith,' except the person that believeth it hath received it immediately from God himself. But whether he will allow it to be called 'divine faith,' or not, the calling it by another name doth not at all alter the nature of the thing, or dissolve the obligation. If I have sufficient reason to be convinced that miracles of such a nature, and so circumstanced, supposing them to have been really done, are strong attestations to the truth, and divine original of the doctrines and laws which they are wrought to confirm; and if I have sufficient assurance that these facts were really done, then I am obliged to believe and receive those doctrines, and obey those laws, as of divine authority. To do otherwise would be to refuse to believe doctrines which I have just ground to conclude were revealed from God himself, and to refuse to obey laws which I have just ground to believe God himself hath enjoined; which would be a very criminal conduct, highly displeasing to God, and contrary to the duty that reasonable creatures owe to the Supreme Being.

Thus I have considered what this author offers with regard to the proofs or evidences of divine revelation in general, in which his design is plainly to show that there can be no proper proofs or evidences of divine revelation to any but the persons immediately receiving it, and yet at the same time he affects to own the great usefulness of revelation in the present corrupt and degenerate state of mankind.

CHAPTER II.

An Entrance on the Author's Objections against the Old Testament. The strange Representation he makes of the law of Moses. Some general Considerations concerning the Nature and Design of that Law. Its moral Precepts pure and excellent. Its ritual Injunctions appointed for wise Reasons. The Nature of its Sanctions considered. Reasons of God's erecting the People of Israel into a peculiar Polity. Nothing absurd in this Constitution. It was designed in a Subserviency to the general Good. The miraculous Facts whereby that Law was confirmed not poetical Embellishments, but real Facts. The Author's Reasons to prove that those Facts could not be understood in a literal Historical Sense shown to be vain and insufficient.

HAVING considered what this author hath advanced concerning divine revelation in general, and the proofs whereby it is established, I now proceed to the particular attempts he makes to destroy the authority of the revelation contained in the sacred writings of the Old and New Testament. He seems willing indeed to observe some measures with regard to Christianity, but as to the Old Testament he throws off all disguise; he everywhere openly rejects, and makes the most disadvantageous representation possible both of the law of Moses and the prophetic writings, and expressly declares he will 'have nothing to do with them in religion,' p. 394. If his representation be true, they are not only no true divine revelation, but a grand imposture, contrary to reason and common sense, and to the liberties of mankind.

To begin with the account he gives of the law of Moses he expressly declares that in its original proper and literal sense, which he says was the only sense intended by the lawgiver, 'It had neither anything of truth or goodness in it, but was a blinding enslaving constitution, and an intolerable yoke of darkness and bondage, tyranny and vassalage, wrath and misery,' p. 29. That it was a law 'that introduced and confirmed a state of civil and religious blindness and bigotry,' &c. p. 32. That it was a 'national slavery, which the Jews had been unjustly subjected to, and which they had a right to throw off whenever they had a proper opportunity, and to assert and reassume their natural and religious rights and liberties,' p. 51. He calls it a 'wretched scheme of superstition, blindness, and slavery, contrary to all reason and common sense, set up under the specious popular pretence of a divine institution and revelation from God,' p. 71. These and others of the like nature are the handsome epithets he everywhere bestows upon the law of Moses. He is not content with declaring it to be a mere piece of human policy, but makes it the worst constitution in the world. Nor did any of the heathens, the greatest enemies of the Jews, ever speak in such opprobrious terms of Moses and his constitutions as this pretended Christian writer has done. If the law of Moses merits these epithets, it certainly deserves the abhorrence of all mankind, and Moses, instead of being extraordinarily sent and inspired by God, was the most pernicious impostor that ever

was, and the greatest enemy to his nation, who, instead of regarding him as they always did with the utmost veneration, should rather have execrated his memory.

Before I enter on a particular discussion of the objection he advances against the law of Moses, I shall offer some general considerations concerning the nature and design of that law, whereby the true original intent, and the excellency and property of that law may more evidently appear.

At the time when the law was given, idolatry had made a very great progress, the primitive religion which was both derived by tradition from the early patriarchs, the progenitors of the human race, and was also very agreeable to right reason, was very much corrupted, especially in the main principle of it, the worship and acknowledgment of one only the living and true God: and though there were considerable remains of the ancient true religion still preserved in some particular families, yet things were growing worse and worse; and it is highly probable that, if God had not extraordinarily interposed, true religion and the just knowledge and worship of the deity would have been lost among men. It pleased him therefore, in this state of things, to select a nation to himself, among whom the knowledge and worship of the true God should be preserved in a world overrun with idolatry. And to that end he first exerted his own almighty power and goodness in delivering that nation from a state of extreme distress, slavery, and oppression, and that in so extraordinary a manner as exhibited a marvellous display of his own majesty and glory, and an entire triumph over idols in the very seat of idolatry, for so Egypt then was; and then caused the most pure and excellent laws to be given them, which were promulgated with the greatest solemnity, and attested by the most amazing and unparalleled miracles. And, in order the more effectually to answer the main design he had in view, it pleased him to enter into a peculiar relation to that people, and to take them for his own by a solemn public act or covenant, whereby the people on the one hand brought themselves under the most express and solemn engagements, to obey the laws he gave them, and to be absolutely devoted to his service; and he, on his part, engaged to be their God and King in a special relation, to give them the land of Canaan for their inheritance, and to pour forth many signal benefits upon them, and make them a happy people. I see nothing in this unworthy of God, or that can be shown to be inconsistent with his divine perfection. Nor can this writer himself consistently find fault with it, since speaking of the covenant God made with Abraham, in which he promised to 'be a God to him, and to his seed, and to settle them in the possession of the land of Canaan, and make them happy upon the condition of their continuing in the religion and worship of the one true God,' &c., he saith this was 'a wise and reasonable transaction between God and Abraham; and, had the conditions been performed by Abraham's family and posterity, no doubt but the grant on God's part had been made good.' pp. 258, 259.

* If we inquire into the nature of the laws that were given them, the main design of them seems evidently to be this; to preserve them from idolatry, and vice, and wickedness, and to engage them to the worship of the only true God, and to the practice of righteousness. The great fundamental principle that lies at the foundation of the whole body of laws delivered by Moses, and to which there is a constant reference in that whole constitution, and whereby it is eminently distinguished from all other the most celebrated ancient laws and constitutions is this, that there is but one only the living and true God, who is alone to be worshipped and adored, loved and obeyed. He is there represented as the eternal and self-existent Jehovah, Almighty and Allsufficient, to whom there is none like, or that can be compared, and who is not to be represented by any corporeal form; that he is the great Creator of the universe, who made heaven and earth and all things that are therein, by the word of his power, and who preserveth and governeth all things by his Providence, directing and ordering all events; that he is most just and holy, most faithful and true, a hater of iniquity, who will severely punish obstinate presumptuous transgressors, and yet is 'full of compassion and gracious longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth,' and ready to forgive penitent returning sinners. In that law they are everywhere most strictly commanded to worship and serve the Lord God, and him only, to love him with all their hearts and souls, to fear him, and dread his displeasure above all things, to put their whole trust and confidence in him, to submit themselves cheerfully to his rightful authority, and to obey all his commands.

And as the law of Moses directs and instructs men in the duties they more immediately owe to God, so also in those they owe to one another. It forbids in the strongest manner all malice, and wrath, and bitterness; all injustice and fraud, violence and oppression; all fornication, and adultery, and uncleanness; all falsehood, and guile, and deceit; and even all covetous and inordinate affections and desires: it not only requires exact truth and fidelity, a strict inviolable honesty in our dealings towards all men, but it expressly requires us to love our neighbours as ourselves, to be ready to assist and do good to one another upon all occasions, yea, even to our enemies themselves, to show mercy to the poor, the indigent, and destitute strangers and servants.* Upon the whole, the moral precepts of the law of Moses are pure and excellent; they are such as, if duly practised and obeyed, could not fail to make that nation happy, if the pure worship of God, and the practice of righteousness, justice, fidelity, temperance, and of mutual charity and benevolence could make them so. Moses therefore might justly represent these laws and statutes as sufficient, if carefully obeyed and attended to, to make them a 'wise and understanding people,' above other nations, Deut. iv. 5, 6; and again,

* See Exod. xx. 12—18; xxii. 21, 24; xxiii. 1—8. Lev. vi. 2, 5; xix. 18, 36; xxv. 14—17; xiv. 29; xxii. 1—4, 22—29; xxiii. 17; xxiv. 20—22; xxv. 13—16.

ver. 8: 'What nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous, as all this law which I set before you this day?'

As to the ritual precepts there enjoined, which are many and various; though it cannot be expected that we should be able to assign the particular reasons of them at this distance, yet we have just reason to conclude that they were all given for wise and good purposes, which rendered them very fit and proper for that time, and for that people.* Many of them were designed for the more effectual obtaining that which was the proper and principal end of that law, which was to preserve the Jews from idolatry. For this end, many of the rites prescribed them were in direct opposition to those of the neighbouring idolatrous nations; and great care was taken by many peculiar usages to keep them a distinct and separate people. There were many rites also that added a great outward pomp and solemnity to their worship, that they might be the less in danger of being drawn aside by the splendour and decorations of the heathenish idolatry. Other rites were instituted in commemoration of great and signal events, extraordinary acts of Providence towards their nation, the keeping up of a constant remembrance of which could not but be of great use for preserving the love and worship of God amongst them, awakening their gratitude, and engaging their dutiful obedience. And lastly, many of the rites then prescribed had a farther view to the Messiah, his offices,

* I doubt not but if we had distinct views of the reasons of the several ritual injunctions prescribed in the law of Moses, the wisdom and goodness of God in appointing them would eminently appear. Many happy attempts have been made this way by learned persons, both Jews and Christians, that have given great light to many of the Mosaic rites and constitutions. It is evident there is nothing in any of them that intrencheth on the sacred rules of virtue, purity, and decency, as did many of the rites in use among the heathen nations: e.g., the cruel rites of Moloch, and the impure ones of Baal-Peor. And it may not be improper to observe, that some of the Mosaic constitutions, which seem at first view most strange and extraordinary, if closely considered, do furnish a proof of the divine original of that constitution and polity. Of this kind I take the law relating to the Sabbatical year to be. Every seventh year was to be a Sabbath of rest unto the land, a Sabbath for the Lord, in which they were neither to sow their fields nor prune their vineyards. And it is expressly promised that God would command his blessing upon them in the sixth year, and it should bring forth fruit for three years, that is, for the sixth and the two succeeding years, the seventh and eighth, Lev. xxv. 2, 4, 20, 22. No constitution like this can be found in the laws of any other nation. And it may be strongly argued, that Moses would not have proposed such a law, if he had been left merely to himself in his legislation, and had not received it from God, who was alone able to make good that promise upon which the observation of it depended; and by so doing, gave a standing remarkable evidence of his constant special presence and Providence amongst them, and both confirmed the authority of that law, and answered the main design of it, which was to keep them close to the acknowledgment, obedience, and adoration of him the only true God, in preference to all idols, since nothing of this kind could be produced in favour of any of the idol deities. And accordingly, in the Sabbatical year, the whole nation, not the men only, but the women and children, were obliged to appear at the place which the Lord should choose, and were to hear the whole law read to them, Deut. xxxi. 10—13, which was then most likely to be attended to, and to make an impression, as they had then in the abundant plenty of that year, and the extraordinary provision made for them; a sensible proof of God's sovereign dominion and providence, and of the divine original and authority of that law before their eyes. Other reflections of this kind might be made on several of the Mosaic constitutions. But the particular consideration of them would take up more time than is consistent with my present design.

and benefits, of which they were designed as types and prefigurations. I know this writer will not allow this, but he must not take it ill if we prefer the authority of the apostle Paul to his; what he offers against it shall be considered afterwards. But though many and various rites are enjoined and prescribed in the Mosaical law, yet still it is evident that the main stress is there laid on things of a moral nature, the great essential duties of religion. The absolute necessity of real universal righteousness, piety, and charity, justice, temperance, the fear and love of God, is there frequently and strongly inculcated, and most pathetically enforced. Scarce anything can be more moving and affecting than the exhortations to piety and virtue given by Moses to the people of Israel, especially in the last part of his life in the book of Deuteronomy. Any one that seriously and impartially considers them will find such a wonderful force and pathos, as well as a divine solemnity in them, as cannot but give a very advantageous idea of that excellent person, and of the laws he gave them in the name of God. All along in that law the favour of God is promised to those that go on in the practice of righteousness; that God will love them, and delight in them, and will most certainly reward them, and make them happy. And on the other hand, the most awful threatenings are there denounced against presumptuous transgressors. God's purity and holiness, his detestation against sin, and the terrors of his wrath and vengeance, are there described in the most strong, and ardent, and significant expressions, which have a manifest tendency where they are really believed, and seriously considered to fill men with a deep sense of the evil and malignity of sin, and to deter them from committing it.

It is true that the immortality of the soul and a future state of rewards and punishments, is rather supposed and implied in the law of Moses, than directly asserted and revealed; and one reason of this might be, that these things were not controverted or denied in those early ages. A considerable part even of the idolatry that then prevailed, proceeded upon the notion of separate incorporeal beings; and especially the worship of departed heroes, necessarily supposed that their souls survived after death. Cicero speaks of the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, as a tradition derived from the most ancient time. And it might easily be shown that it spread universally through all nations, and still continued to be believed among them, even when they had lost the true knowledge and worship of God. This appears from the best accounts we have of the sentiments of the ancient Egyptians, Chaldeans, Phœnicians, Scythians, &c., but afterwards through the false refinements of philosophy and vain deceit in the latter ages, under the pretence of wisdom above the vulgar, many began to dispute against, and to deny the immortality of the soul and a future state. And therefore it became then absolutely necessary to make the most clear and express revelation of it, and to set it in the strongest light, as it is done by the gospel of Jesus; but as far as appears, it was universally acknowledged when the law of Moses was given; and I

shall afterwards show that it is plainly implied in that law, and was all along believed by the body of the Jewish nation in all ages.

But it must be considered, that as the law of Moses was immediately directed to the whole people of Israel considered as a nation or community, so the sanctions of that law, or the promises and threatenings whereby obedience to it was enforced, were suited to the nature and circumstances of a community, and therefore were directly and immediately of a temporal nature, relating to the happiness or misery, the good or evil consequences, their obedience or disobedience would bring upon them in this present world. And there was a manifest propriety in it, that these things should be much insisted on in that law; because some of its injunctions and observances, though instituted for wise reasons, seemed laborious and burdensome, as well as contrary to those of other nations; God was pleased therefore to assure them that this should not turn to their disadvantage even in this present state; that he would abundantly compensate their obedience by various blessings, which he would pour forth upon them in this world; and that by a faithful adherence to his service they would promote their present interest, and by a neglect and disobedience to his laws would draw upon themselves the greatest evils and calamities. Such promises and blessings were most likely to make strong and vigorous impressions on the minds of the people, and were wisely and condescendingly adapted to their tempers and circumstances, to allure and engage them to obedience, and to deter them from idolatry and wickedness. But still these did not exclude the rewards and punishments of a future state, which were all along supposed and implied, and the knowledge and belief of which was derived to them from the ancient patriarchs, and had obtained among them and other nations from the beginning.

Upon this brief view of the law of Moses, it appears that the main design of it was most excellent, viz. to preserve those to whom it was given from the general idolatry and wickedness that had overspread the world, and to maintain the knowledge and worship of the only true God, and the practice of true religion and righteousness among them. And all the subsequent administrations of God toward them were wisely fitted to promote the same valuable design. It was for this that he interposed from time to time in an extraordinary manner, by signal acts of Providence, in a way of judgment or mercy, sufficient to awaken the most stupid to acknowledge and adore his hand, and to convince them that their blessings and punishments came from him. The idolatrous nations had with the true worship of God almost lost the right notions of his Providence. They attributed their blessings and calamities wholly to inferior deities, in whose hands they supposed the administration and government of human affairs to be vested; to whom therefore they addressed themselves, and paid all their worship and homage, whilst they almost entirely neglected the Supreme Being, as not concerning himself with the affairs of men. But

God's treatment of the Jews, and his way of administration towards them, was a constant proof of his Providence, and was peculiarly fitted to prevent their being led away by those pernicious notions, and to lead them to regard and consider the hand of God in all things that befel them.

If it be urged as an absurd thing in that constitution, that God is there represented as entering into a peculiar relation to one particular people, who were to be kept distinct and separate from all others; let it be considered that the particular relation that for wise ends he entered into towards this people, was no way inconsistent with his universal dominion and government, but supposed it. He was still as much as ever the Ruler of the world, and the God and Parent of all mankind. Nor did the particular and special benefits conferred upon this people at all lessen his universal goodness. And surely no man who believeth that God presides over all events, and concerns himself in human affairs, and at the same time doth observe the mighty difference that hath been and is made between some persons, and some nations, and others, with respect to all advantages for improvement in knowledge and virtue, will pretend to say that it is inconsistent with the wisdom or goodness of Divine Providence, to distinguish one nation with peculiar privileges and advantages above others, since it is still true that he doth, and hath all along done, much good to all in the methods of his kind providence, and giveth them many advantages if they were careful to make a right improvement of them.

But besides it must be considered, that God's thus selecting a peculiar people or nation in so extraordinary a manner, and giving them such laws, was not merely designed for the sake of that particular people, but was designed in a subserviency to the general good, and had a tendency to promote it by keeping up the knowledge of true religion in the world, which otherwise was in danger of being extinguished. By virtue of this peculiar constitution there was still a remnant preserved, professing and maintaining the knowledge and worship of the only true God free from idolatry. There was still true religion maintained like a light shining in a dark place, and how far this light was diffused, and how many kindled their lamps at it, we cannot tell. The Israelites were placed in a convenient situation between Egypt, and Assyria, and Chaldea, the most remarkable countries then on earth. And the carrying them out of Egypt in such a wonderful manner, and settling them in Canaan, with such a series of mighty acts, and an outstretched arm, and afterwards the marvellous interpositions of Divine Providence towards them in a way of judgment or mercy, would probably reach a great way, and spread the fear of God unto distant nations. And in many passages of Scripture it is signified that this was one design for which they were intended. The fame of the mighty acts done for Israel, and the laws given them, is represented as reaching to the heathens, and spreading the glory and majesty of God; and the nations are called upon to regard

and to consider them.* It is very probable, particularly that in the days of David, when the kingdom of Israel made a great figure, and was of considerable extent, and in the reign of Solomon, who was so admired and sought unto from all parts for his wisdom, and under whom the most glorious structure was built to the only true God that ever the world saw; the Israelites and their laws and constitutions, became more generally known, and this might have a very good effect in bringing many to the knowledge and worship and obedience of the true God. It is evident, from the language of Hiram, king of Tyre, and of the queen of Sheba, that they had a high esteem and veneration for the Lord Jehovah, the God of Israel, 2 Chron. xi. 11, 12, 1 Kings x. 9, and the like may be supposed concerning many others.

After this even their captivities and dispersions were made subservient by Divine Providence towards spreading the knowledge of religion in the countries where they were scattered, and where many of them became very eminent, and with a remarkable steadiness adhered to their law, and to the religion and worship of the true God there prescribed. The decrees of Nebuchadnezzar, and Darius, and Cyrus, show the esteem they had for the only living and true God, the God of Israel, Dan. xi. 47, iii. 29, iv. 33—37, vi. 25—27; Ezra i. 2, 4. And it has been very probably supposed by many learned men, and it was owing very much to the light derived from the Jews, and the admirable writings and laws preserved among them, that there was more of the knowledge of God, and of some of the main principles of religion preserved in the East than in other parts of the world. The nearer we come to the times of the gospel, the plainer proofs we have of the knowledge and worship of the true God and religion, being spread and propagated by the Jews. As they were diffused almost all over the Roman empire, as well as in Persia and the Eastern countries, so they every where proselyted great numbers to the worship of the only true God in opposition to the fashionable idolatry which then universally prevailed. It does not appear that any of the most refined philosophers, those men of admired knowledge and genius, ever converted so much as a single person or village from their idolatrous superstitions; on the contrary, they all meanly submitted and conformed to the idolatry established in their respective countries, and exhorted others to do so too. Whereas the Jews were instrumental to turn many from idolatry, and to spread the knowledge of the true God far and wide in many parts of the Roman empire, Babylonia, Persia, &c., and this tended to prepare the world for receiving that last and most perfect dispensation which our Lord Jesus Christ was to introduce.

This naturally leads our thoughts to another valuable end, which shows the propriety of erecting the Jews into a particular polity, and separating them from the rest of mankind by peculiar laws;

* See Exod. vii. 5, ix. 6; Lev. xxvi. 45; Numb. xiv. 13, 15; Deut. iv. 6; 1 Kings viii. 41—43, lvii. 9, lxvi. 1—5; Psal. xcvi. 1—4; Jer. xxxiii. 9.

and that is, the subserviency this had to the great design the wisdom of God had all along in view, viz. the *sending* his Son in the fulness of time, to save and to redeem mankind, and to bring the clearest and most perfect revelation of his will. There had been some general promises and expectations of the Redeemer to come made and communicated to mankind from the beginning of the world. But this, like other traditions derived from the earliest ages, was, in process of time, corrupted and lost; so that if this promise and hope had been left merely at large among the nations in general, there would have been scarce any traces of it remaining. This the divine wisdom foresaw, and therefore it pleased God for this, as well as other purposes, to select a peculiar people, to be, as it were, the depositaries of that hope and promise, who accordingly were kept distinct, as a kind of special inclosure from the rest of mankind. He appointed that the Saviour who was to come, and who had been foretold from the beginning, should spring and arise out of that nation, and from a particular tribe and family amongst them. He ordered it so, that many of their laws and rights had a reference to this great event. A succession of prophets was raised among them, who described that glorious person that was to come by his most remarkable characters; foretold the benefits of his kingdom, and plainly pointed out the time and place of his birth, and principal circumstances of his appearance. And accordingly among that people there was constantly kept up a belief and expectation of his coming, and from them it spread generally through the nations. All this prepared the world for receiving him, and together with the illustrious attestations given to him at his actual appearance, by the miracles he performed, by his resurrection from the dead, and the consequent effusion of the Holy Ghost, yielded all the evidence that was proper in a case of such vast importance. Thus that peculiar constitution tended to keep the proofs of his mission more distinct, and give them a greater force. Accordingly the first harvest of converts to Christianity was among the Jews, and the Jewish proselytes, who were prepared for it by the knowledge of the only true God, and the belief of the Mosaic and prophetic writings. And even the unbelieving Jews, who rejected the Messiah; when he actually came, were, and still are, without intending it, remarkable witnesses for Christianity. The proofs drawn from those books, the divine inspiration of which they themselves acknowledge, come with greater force and evidence when transmitted and attested by enemies, than if they had been conveyed to us by them as friends. And when after their long infidelity, the body of them shall be converted to the Christian faith, which I think is plain from what the apostle Paul saith in the eleventh chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, this shall give a farther evidence in favour of Christianity. All this we may justly suppose to have entered into the scheme of God's most wise providence, who saw all things from the beginning, in setting apart the Jews to be a peculiar people to himself, and giving them such a

constitution whereby they were to be kept separate and distinct from the rest of mankind.

These several observations may serve to give us an idea of the Mosaic constitution, which appears to have been excellently fitted and designed to preserve the knowledge and worship of the only true God, in opposition to all idolatry, to guide those to whom it was given to true religion, and the practice of righteousness; and to preserve the faith and hope of the Redeemer, to prepare the world for his coming, and give fuller attestations to him when he actually came; and consequently, it appears that this constitution answered many wise purposes of Divine Providence, and was made subservient to the general good of mankind.

And now I shall proceed to consider the objections this writer brings against the Mosaic law and constitution. He pretends to invalidate the truth of the miraculous attestations whereby that law was attested; he argues against that law and constitution, from the authority of St. Paul, and from the pretended inconsistency between it and the New Testament; and endeavours, in several instances to show, that it was in itself an unrighteous constitution, tyrannical and absurd, and unworthy of God.

Let us first consider what our author offers against the truth of the extraordinary miraculous *facts* whereby this law was attested. And the way he goes about to invalidate them, is not by denying that this history was written by Moses, or proving that the history is false; but he undertakes to show, that the relations there given us of those facts were not designed to be understood as historical accounts of facts that really happened, but purely were poetical embellishments, like the fictions of Homer, and never intended by Moses himself to be taken in a literal sense. He first pretends to give an account of the original of miracles, which he derives from the juggles and impostures of the Egyptian priests: 'Who having set themselves diligently to the study of occult philosophy, or natural magic, in which they made great improvements, and which they kept as deep secrets to themselves, made the people believe that they had an immediate intercourse and communication with the gods. From that time Egypt became a land of miracles and prodigies, continually wrought by these holy magicians, which had such an effect upon the Israelites, in the course of 210 years, whilst they remained in Egypt, that nothing could influence them but miracles; and they would never have regarded Moses if he could not have outdone the Egyptian Sorcerers,' pp. 241, 242. And again he tells us, that 'as they had seen nothing for 200 years together but miracles and prodigies, wrought by these priestly magicians, they could conceive of no other way of receiving information and instruction from God,' pp. 247, 248. And then he goes on to observe,—

That 'Moses and the prophets being under a necessity, from the blindness and obduracy of the people, always wrote with a double intention, or ambiguous construction. They had a *popular* political sense, which, as the most literal and obvious, was most suited to the

gross apprehensions, prejudices, and superstitions of the vulgar; and at the same time another meaning or construction, which was the true and *rational* one; but to be supposed and understood only by the wiser sort, the case was this, that the most ancient narrative authors, whether sacred or profane, did not write as mere historians, but as orators, poets, and dramatists, in which way of writing they kept up to strict historical truth, as to the fundamental leading facts, or principal events, but with regard to the manner and circumstances of action, the orator and poet often took the liberty to embellish and recommend the history with such sensible images and dramatic representations, as being most agreeable to the popular taste, and vulgar notions, might the more effectually move and direct the affections and passions of the people, as the great engines and springs of government.' Thus he observes, that 'Homer's account of the Trojan war, and of the conquest of the country by the Greeks is historically true, as to the principal facts and persons concerned on both sides; but his manner and circumstances of action, his miraculous imagery, and poetic ornaments, are all his own, like our Milton and Shakspeare.' And observes, that 'the history of the Exodus and conquest of Canaan relates to things done 600 years before Homer's time, and is written much in the same oratorical and dramatic way; that these poetic beauties and dramatic representations of things can occasion no difficulty to those who enter into the spirit and design of the author, and who can distinguish the orator or poet from the historian: but vulgar heads must make strange work with such performances, who, without entering into the spring and design, should understand every thing according to the letter; and this was the case of the Jewish nation, with regard to the writings of Moses and the prophets, and St. Paul has evidently and irrefutably proved it,' pp. 249—251.

Let us suppose all that this writer affirms to be true concerning the Egyptian priests and their pretended miracles and prodigies. I think it clearly follows from this representation of things, that if they pretended to work miracles in support of idolatry, and made use of these to propagate the worship of demons, this made it highly becoming the wisdom and goodness of God, when he had it in view to establish a constitution, or peculiar polity, and give a system of laws, particularly designed in opposition to the spreading idolatry, to establish it by such extraordinary and amazing acts of power, as should fully exert his divinity and glory, and supreme dominion; works of such a nature, that none of the pretended wonders wrought by the Egyptian priests or magicians could be set in competition with them. This shows the propriety of all those miraculous works done in Egypt, those *signs and wonders*, as they are often called, done *in the land of Ham*. The doing these things in Egypt, the seat of idolatry, from whence it was propagated to other nations, was such a triumph over all their idols, and those great patrons and propagators of idolatry, as ought to have had a mighty influence upon them. The plagues and judgments inflicted

upon them, should have awakened them, and all that heard of these things, to serious reflections. And God's interposing in these circumstances, by a series of such wonderful works, so far superior to all that were wrought, or pretended to be wrought, in favour of idolatry, was of great service for the establishing true religion in the world.

If the miracles wrought by Moses had not been of a very extraordinary and unparalleled nature, this writer, and others of his way, would have been ready to say there was nothing in them supernatural, nothing but what might have been performed by the art of cunning men, or by skill in occult philosophy, and natural magic. And yet now that they are so amazing and stupendous, so beyond all parallel, their very greatness and extraordinary nature is made an objection against them, and a reason for not believing them.

This writer has let us plainly enough know that he does not believe the miracles to have been really wrought, that are recorded in the books of Moses, to have been wrought in Egypt, and in the wilderness, and he has in his great sagacity, found out a very extraordinary expedient for salving the credit of Moses, and yet denying the truth of the facts which he relates. He has discovered that Moses's history is a poem, and that all these accounts of facts are only poetical embellishments or fictions; and that he always wrote with a 'double or ambiguous construction,' the one full of the marvellous, suited to the 'gross apprehensions of the vulgar,' the other the true 'and rational one, to be understood only by the wiser sort.' But certainly, never was there any thing more remote from poetical ornaments, or the affectation of studied oratory, than the Mosaic history. It was not that Moses, if he had designed to write a poem, was not capable of doing it to great advantage. The admirable specimens he has given us of this kind, in the song he composed on occasion of the Israelites passing the Red Sea, and in that which he gave to them a little before his decease, and in the blessings he pronounced upon the tribes, show the sublimity of his figures, noble and lofty expressions, beautiful and significant metaphors; but in the body of his history, where he gives an account of laws and facts, all these things are carefully avoided. Every thing is related in the most simple unadorned manner, as becomes plain truth, and a naked narration of facts. The orator and poet nowhere appears, but the plain grave historian and lawgiver; the extraordinary miraculous facts whereby the law was attested, are proposed to the people as things that really happened, yea, as things which they themselves had seen, and to which they were witnesses. He appeals to the body of the people concerning the truth of these facts, and founds the authority of his laws upon them. And will this writer, or any man that has any regard to reason or argument, say there is any parallel between this and the writing an heroic poem like Homer? or can any man of common sense suppose that Homer intended to put all the fictions he relates, upon the people, for things that literally and historically happened?

:- If Moses himself wrote those books that give an account of the laws and facts; and we have as full a proof of this, as we can have that any book was written by any author under whose name it goes; for we have the constant testimony of the whole nation to whom those laws were given, and who regarded them with great veneration, as the rule of their polity; and of all other nations that had occasion to mention them, still ascribed these laws and writings to Moses; and which ought to have a great weight with Christians, they are all along ascribed to him in the New Testament by our Saviour and his apostles; nor do I find that our author himself denies, but rather supposes it: I say, if Moses himself wrote those accounts of the laws and facts, they were written and published at the very time in which these extraordinary and miraculous facts were said to be done. And if so, the facts related were of such a nature, that it was impossible the people should not know whether they had really happened or not; and it was impossible to have imposed them upon the people as true, or made them to have believed them true, if they had not known them to be so. I will grant all that this writer is pleased to suppose concerning the stupidity and blindness of the Israelites. Let us suppose them to have been the most ignorant, brutish, superstitious generation of men that ever lived upon the earth; yet if it be allowed that they had their senses at all, and that they could tell what was actually done before their eyes, which I think is but a reasonable supposition, then they could know whether these things were done in Egypt, at the Red Sea, and in the Wilderness, which Moses told them were done in their own sight. Could they possibly have been persuaded that they were brought out of Egypt by such a series of mighty stupendous acts done in their own view; that they had passed through the Red Sea as on dry land, whilst the army of Egypt, following them, were overwhelmed with the waters, and that they themselves had seen it; that when they were ready to perish for thirst in the wilderness, Moses only struck the rock in their sight, and waters gushed out in abundance like a river, of which they drank plentifully and their cattle; that they were present when the law was promulgated with such amazing solemnity amidst the most awful thunders and lightnings, and that the words were distinctly pronounced in their own hearing; that they had been fed in the barren wilderness for forty years together, by bread that fell from heaven six days in the week and intermitted the seventh, and that they themselves had gathered it, and lived upon it all along. I say, could a whole nation possibly have been made to believe that all these things had happened to themselves, and in their own sight, if it had not been so? This were the wildest, the most extravagant supposition in the world; nor is a man, that is capable of making such a supposition fit to be disputed with any longer, since it is scarcely possible to drive any man to a greater absurdity. Nor is it less absurd, to suppose that any man in his senses, much less so wise a man as Moses certainly was, would have taken such a way as this of dealing with the people, and would have appealed

to them concerning such facts, of the falsehood of which the whole nation could have convinced him, if they had not been true. This would have been to have taken the most effectual way in the world to defeat his own design, by putting the credit of his own divine mission, and the authority of his laws, upon facts of so public a nature, which it was the easiest thing in the world to contradict, and which the meanest of the people, that had the use of their senses, must on that supposition have known to be false. And the frequent murmurings against Moses, and the opposition made to his authority and to his laws, many of which were contrary to the people's deeply imbibed prejudices and customs, shows that it would not have been easy to have managed them, if they had not been fully convinced that all those facts to which Moses appealed were true. His exhortations to the people in the book of Deuteronomy, not long before his death, when he made a solemn repetition of the laws and facts; I say, the pathetic exhortations he gives them to obedience, are founded on those facts, and have a constant reference to them; and they are delivered with the greatest gravity and solemnity, and at the same time with the greatest plainness and simplicity, and a most fatherly tenderness and compassion towards the people. They have all the marks of seriousness and truth that any thing can possibly have. And as he commanded the people to acquaint themselves with the laws he had given them in the name of God, and to teach them diligently to their children, so also to instruct them in the great things which God had done for them, or the extraordinary miraculous facts wrought in attestation of those laws. Besides all which, he instituted sacred rites, which were to be observed by all the people, with great solemnity, at stated times every year, on purpose to keep up the remembrance of these extraordinary facts, and to transmit them to future generations. And accordingly, the memory of these wonderful facts was still preserved, and the truth of them acknowledged, by the whole nation, and that in the times of their greatest degeneracy, and under all the revolutions of their government. In all their public monuments, in all the writings that were published in different ages among them, there is a constant reference, not only to these laws as given by Moses to their nation, but to the wonderful facts that were done in attestation of these laws, as of undoubted credit.

As to what our author talks, of a double sense in the writings of Moses and the prophets, the one designed for the vulgar, the other for the wiser sort; it is to be observed, that he is only for admitting this double sense in the historical narration of facts related in the writings of Moses; but he denies that any of the laws of Moses, or the prophecies, have any mystical or typical sense at all, or any farther reference than the mere letter; as I shall have occasion to take notice afterwards. Thus the laws of Moses, and the prophetic writings, must be taken in a literal or mystical sense, just as he thinks will best answer the end he has in view, of exposing them. Prophecies delivered in figurative expressions, and the whole turn of which leads to a farther view, they are to be carried no farther

than the bare letter ; but matters of fact told in a plain simple manner must be figurative and mystical. He tells us indeed that this pretended figurative sense of the facts was ' understood by the wiser sort.' But it is certain that in this respect there was no difference between the wise men and the vulgar among the Jews, all without exception believed the account of these extraordinary miraculous feats recorded by Moses ; even their wisest men, whose admirable writings, far superior to those of the most celebrated philosophers, show them to have been men of excellent sense and knowledge, and just notions of things.

But what is most extraordinary, our author is for bringing in the apostle Paul as a voucher to prove that the facts recorded in the law of Moses, were no more than poetical embellishments. He says that apostle ' has evidently and irrefutably proved ' that the Jews were in the wrong in understanding the writings of Moses according to the letter, that is, in taking the facts there recorded, (for of these the author is there speaking) for things that really and literally happened, see p. 251. But nothing can be more evident to any one that is acquainted with the writings of St. Paul, than that whenever he has occasion to refer to any of the extraordinary miraculous facts done in attestation of the Mosaical dispensation, he always supposes them to be things of undoubted truth and credit, and which really and actually happened ; but with respect to some of the rites prescribed in the law of Moses, he shows they had a farther view to the gospel times, as types and shadows of good things to come, and were designed as preparatory to the dispensation of the Messiah. Now this the author ventures to contradict, and in opposition to the apostle boldly asserts, that the law of Moses had no such typical view or mystical sense at all ; but with regard to the historical facts which are plainly and clearly related, these things are only to be understood and taken in a mystical or allegorical sense. And this he would pass upon us for St. Paul's opinion, as if this was that spiritual and typical sense of the law which that apostle pleads for. The most extensive charity scarce leaves room to suppose that this author is so blind as not to know that this is gross and wilful misrepresentation.

But let us consider what he pretends to offer as a proof that the miraculous facts recorded in the writings of Moses, and by which that law was attested, are not to be understood in a literal sense ; that is, as he intends it, that they were not types in fact, nor accounts of things that really happened, but merely poetical embellishments.

He says, p. 251 : ' Should we take this drama in the obvious literal sense [that is if we take the historical accounts Moses gives to be really true] we must suppose him to have been a more fabulous romantic writer than Homer, Æsop, Ovid, or any of the heathen poets and mythologists.' This is very boldly and confidently said after the author's manner, but let us see what proof he brings of so strange an assertion.

He saith that, ' if the history of the Exodus, as he calls it, or

deliverance out of Egypt, and conquest of Canaan be taken in the literal obvious sense, we must suppose that God in those days appeared, spoke, and acted like a man, or a finite circumscribed Being, in a visible sensible manner; that he conversed intimately and familiarly with Moses, as a man talketh with his friend; that he went out of Egypt at the head of the Israelites' army, and walked with them through the Red Sea; that he travelled up and down with them forty years in the wilderness, always at the beck or call of Moses, to consult and talk with him upon every occasion; that God, in a visible sensible manner, as personally present, always gave Moses the word of command when they should march, and when they should not, and marked out every foot of ground from time to time for the encampments of their respective tribes. In short, God himself, as visibly and personally present, acted as a General, and Moses had nothing to do but to follow orders, and obey the word of command, and which a fool might have done as well as a wise man.' p. 252.

And is this all the proof he brings, that the historical facts recorded in the writings of Moses, are no more to be credited than *Æsop's Fables*, or *Ovid's Metamorphoses*, because there are some metaphorical expressions used, which, as they are circumstanced, and comparing one part of these writings with another, can scarce mislead the meanest understandings? and I will undertake to say that whatever opinion he has of the stupidity of the Jews, they were not so senseless as to understand those expressions in that sense he puts upon them, though they all firmly believed the facts.

He would have it believed that according to the literal obvious sense of the Mosaic history, God is represented to the people as a finite circumscribed Being, appearing to the Israelites all along in the shape of a man, walking as such with them through the Red Sea, going at the head of their army as their General, and travelling up and down with them through the wilderness, &c., whereas there is not one passage in the whole account that represents God as appearing to the Israelites in human shape; but the very contrary is directly and strongly asserted, and that as the foundation of the laws that were given them. They are expressly forbidden to worship God by any image or corporeal representation whatsoever, or under 'the likeness of any thing in heaven and earth,' and that because they saw 'no manner of similitude,' when the Lord spake unto them, Deut. iv. 12, 15. Where would have been the force of this, if it had been represented to them that God continually walked among them and before them in human shape? All that can be gathered from the obvious sense of the Mosaic account, literally understood, is this: That as it pleased God for wise ends to select the people of Israel as a peculiar people to himself, so, in order to impress them with a more lively sense of his immediate presence and divine majesty, he manifested himself among them by a visible 'cloud of glory,' the illustrious symbol and token of his special presence; which exhibited a wondrous

splendour without any human shape or bodily form. This cloud of glory conducted the people in their journeyings through the wilderness. Thither Moses had frequently recourse for direction, and probably received orders and instructions, by a voice proceeding from amidst that glory. All this was indeed a marvellous instance of goodness and condescension in the Supreme Being, but it can never be proved to have any thing in it absurd or unworthy of God, and inconsistent with his essential attributes and perfections. I suppose this author himself will hardly deny that though God is every where essentially present, yet he can give more illustrious displays and exhibitions of his divine presence and majesty by a visible external glory and splendour in some places, and on some occasions than others; and that he can also, if he pleases, either by his own immediate power, or by the ministry of angels, form an audible voice, by which he may declare his will to one or more among mankind, outwardly to their ears as well as inwardly by immediate impressions on the mind. It doth not follow from either of these suppositions that God is a finite limited Being, or that his Essence is circumscribed, or confined to the particular place, where it pleaseth him thus peculiarly to manifest his special presence. Nor does it appear that the meanest of the Jews ever understood it so, who are every where taught in the writings of Moses to form the noblest conceptions of the divine majesty and greatness, as the Maker and Lord, the Preserver and Governor of the world, and as filling the whole universe with his glory, the God 'in heaven above, and in earth beneath,' as it is expressed, Deut. iv. 29.

As to that passage he produces where God is said to speak to Moses face to face, as a man speaketh to his friend, it is plain it is to be understood only of the clear open familiar manner, in which God condescended to reveal himself to Moses above any of the other prophets. The apostle Paul useth such a phrase as this to signify the clearness and perfection of our knowledge in heaven; that then we shall 'not see through a glass darkly, but shall see face to face.' And does it follow that because such a phrase as this appears in the writings of Moses, a phrase which, as it there stands, has no difficulty in it, and is very easy to be understood; that therefore his whole history is a fiction, and the facts there related, though told in a plain simple manner, are all hyperbole and romance?

Will this writer pretend that it is beneath the majesty of God, to concern himself in so peculiar a manner for one particular people, and to grant them such visible tokens of his special presence, and take them under his immediate conduct and government? But if it be not unworthy of his general Providence for him to take care of, and concern himself for particular persons and their affairs, I do not see how it can be proved inconsistent with his glory and perfection to manifest his presence in a special manner, and to give remarkable proofs of his tender care towards a whole nation, in order to keep them close to his worship and service, and secure a

regard to the laws he had been pleased to give them. All that can be said in that case is, that it was a most amazing condescension, and a wonderful grace and goodness, and so it is that he should concern himself with mankind at all. And as this author seems to think it unworthy of the Divine Majesty to concern himself so particularly in the direction and government of that people, so there have been persons that from pretended high thoughts of God, have judged it unworthy of his greatness to concern himself with men or their affairs at all, and thus have been for complimenting him out of his Providence. And others have denied his continual agency and influence in the government of the world, which they suppose to be a great machine first made and put in motion by a divine hand and then left to itself, and to the laws established in the beginning; under pretence that it is unworthy of him continually to interpose in a way of immediate agency: whom this writer zealously opposes, and seems to account little better than atheists.

But he urges it farther as another absurdity in the literal sense of the story: 'That such was the interest of Moses with God that he could make him do whatsoever he pleased. He often changed his mind when he had resolved to destroy the people, and prevailed with him to go further when he had determined to leave them and go no further; and this, lest the Egyptians should mock the God of Israel, and say that he was not able to conduct them through the wilderness, and give them possession of the land which he had promised them, and for which he had engaged his honour and veracity, for above 400 years before, to do it at this very time. This was the main topical argument which Moses is said to have used with God, and by which he gained his ends in every thing but the main point, which was the conquest of the country, which these Israelites were never able to do till David's days, about 400 years after the promise to Abraham was expired. It is true they conquered and took possession of a small part of the country upon the mountains; but they could not drive the inhabitants out of the plains, because they had chariots of iron, or because God never enabled them as infantry to stand before the Canaanites' horse.' pp. 252, 253.

As to Moses's interest with God, as he calls it, supposing Moses to have been what he really was, an excellent person, a devout fearer and lover and adorer of the Deity; I can see no absurdity in supposing that he had an interest with God, if by that be meant no more than that God had a regard to his humble and earnest supplications. But that he could not make God do whatsoever he pleased, as this writer ridiculously expresseth it, is evident, because we are there expressly told that he could not procure that his own life should be prolonged, so as to enter actually into the promised land, though he earnestly desired it, see Deut. iii. 23—26. In his prayers for the people we may observe a deep humility and profound reverence for the Divine Majesty, a fervent zeal for the glory of God, and for the interest of true religion in the world, and a most affectionate concern and love for the people, whose welfare he

valued more than his own life, or the particular advancement of himself or his family. These were noble and excellent dispositions, and where is the absurdity of supposing that a wise, and holy, and merciful God, had a regard to the supplications he offered for the people, flowing from such excellent dispositions? Certainly the reflections the author here makes are very little consistent with the zeal he elsewhere seems to express for the duty of prayer, since they are really no other than the objections that others advance against prayer in general. When he talks of God's changing his mind, and altering his resolution upon Moses's addressing him, I ask, is it in no case proper to apply to God by prayer, for obtaining blessings for ourselves or others, and for deprecating evils, or averting threatened or deserved judgments? and may it not well be supposed that God hath a regard to prayer as a necessary condition for obtaining these blessings, or averting those evils? And when he hearkens to those prayers, he cannot be justly said to change his mind, or alter his purpose, since he does no other than what he had before determined to do. For he both foresaw those prayers and determined to hear them, and not to confer those blessings, or avert those judgments, if those prayers had not been offered. There is nothing in all this but what every man must acknowledge who stands up for prayer as a duty.

To apply this to the present case: God had determined to punish and abandon the Israelites for their idolatry and wickedness, if Moses should not interpose and intercede by humble and earnest supplications; but at the same time he perfectly knew that Moses would thus interpose, and had determined to grant his humble request in their behalf. And in this view all is perfectly consistent. He knew that his threatening to forsake and punish them for their sins, would give occasion to that good and excellent man to plead with him by earnest prayer, and thereby show his love to the people, and zeal for the divine glory, which prayers he had determined to grant. And there was a manifest propriety in it, that God should not pardon and restore the people but upon Moses's intercession, as this tended to procure a greater affection and veneration for him in their minds, and to engage them to pay a greater regard to the laws he gave them in the name of God.

With regard to the topical argument, as this writer calls it, which Moses made use of in pleading with God for the Israelites; if he had fairly represented it, there would have appeared nothing in it absurd, or unfit for such a man as Moses to make use of, as the case was circumstanced, and for God to have a regard unto. If Moses prayed to God at all to avert deserved judgments from the people, was it not proper for him to use reasons or arguments humbly to enforce his petitions? One would think that this author, who would be thought such an advocate for prayer, and who passes such severe censures on those who ridicule and discard it, should readily grant this. If it be allowable for us to offer up our requests to God, then certainly it must be also allowed to be very proper for us to urge our requests with such reasons or argu-

ments as may be fit for reasonable beings to offer to that God who condescends to admit our supplications. Since this tends very much to the exercising and strengthening those good affections and pious dispositions, which it is one great design of the duty of prayer to exercise and improve. Now I cannot see what more proper arguments Moses could have made use of as the case was circumstanced, than what he did. For what arguments can be more fit to be offered to the Supreme Being than those that are drawn from what is becoming his government and excellencies, his wisdom, his faithfulness and truth, his goodness and mercy, and from a regard to the honour of his name, and the interest of true religion in the world? And such as these are the arguments Moses makes use of, as appears from the several passages that relate to this matter, see *Exod. xxxii. 9, 14, Numb. xiv. 13—16, Deut. ix. 25—29*. Though no doubt his prayers were more at large than is there recorded, and delivered with the greatest humility and earnestness, and it is only a very short abstract and summary of them that is there given us. And the particular argument which this author is pleased to ridicule, was very proper, and of great force, if taken out of his ludicrous and sneering manner of representing it; viz., drawn from the reflections the Egyptians and other idolatrous nations would cast on the only true God, if he destroyed that people whom he had so miraculously delivered, and whom he seemed to have chosen peculiarly to himself; and the occasion they would thence take to harden themselves in their idolatry, and in their opposition to God and his worship; and to charge him with unmercifulness, with breach of promise, or want of power. All this Moses humbly represents in his prayers to God; and God perfectly knew all this before Moses represented it, and had determined to act in a manner becoming his own supreme wisdom and glory. But it was his will that Moses should thus plead with him in order to his showing favour to so guilty people, and averting the judgments he had threatened, and they had deserved. In like manner whenever God hath regard to the humble and earnest prayers of good men, he well knows beforehand all that they can urge and represent before him, yet he will have these things represented by themselves, as a condition of his doing it for them.

As to what this writer adds, as if God did not after all perform his promise to Abraham and the Israelites, since they were not put in full possession of the promised land till the time of David, 400 years after the time fixed, for that promise was expired; I need not say much to it, since he himself in several passages of his book acknowledges and asserts that this promise was conditional; and that 'had the conditions been performed by Abraham's family and posterity, no doubt but the grant on God's part had been made good,' see p. 259. It is certain that Moses declares to the Israelites in the most solemn manner, calling heaven and earth to witness, that their obtaining the possession of the promised land, and continuing in it depended on their obedience to the divine law, and keeping close to his true worship and service, and that

otherwise they themselves should perish out of the land, see Deut. iv. 25, 26, &c., and many other passages to the same purpose. To which it may be added, that it is most expressly again and again declared and foretold, that God would not drive out the Canaanites from before them 'all at once, but by little and little,' see Exod. xxiii. 29—31, Deut. vii. 22, 23, which was most literally and punctually fulfilled. It is scarce worth while to take notice of his little sneers, though often repeated by the late writers on that side, concerning God's not being able to drive out the inhabitants of the vallies, because they had chariots of iron. The passage referred to is Judges i. 19: 'And the Lord was with Judah, and he drove out the inhabitants of the mountain, but could not drive out the inhabitants of the valley, because they had chariots of iron.' All that can be fairly gathered from this passage, is this, that the tribe of Judah attacked the inhabitants of the mountains, and God prospered and gave them success; but they suffered themselves to be affrighted and disheartened by the iron chariots of the Canaanites that dwelt in the valleys, and therefore durst not venture to attack them. And this their diffidence and distrust, and not the strength of the Canaanites, was the true cause of their not being able to subdue them. When the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh expressed the same apprehensions, Joshua reproves them for their fears, and assures them that if they did not suffer themselves to be discouraged they should drive out the Canaanites, 'though they were strong, and had iron chariots,' Josh. xvii. 16, 18. And certain it is, that the reason why the men of Judah could not drive out the Canaanites, was not, as this writer is pleased ludicrously to represent it, 'because the Lord never enabled the Israelites as infantry to stand before the Canaanites' horse.' For Joshua attacked and destroyed a mighty host of the Canaanites, 'though they had horses and chariots very many,' Josh. xi. 4, 7, 8, 9, and afterwards we find Sisera and his numerous army, with 300 chariots of iron, was entirely defeated by a small number of Israelites under Barak, Judges iv. 3, 7, 15.

This is all that this writer is pleased to offer to show that Moses's history when taken in the literal sense is more absurd and romantic than Homer, or Æsop's Fables, or Ovid's Metamorphoses. But though he has discovered a very strong inclination to prove this, nothing can be more miserable than the attempts he has made this way. For any thing that he offers to the contrary, Moses's history still holds good; and the miraculous extraordinary facts were really done as recorded; and if they were, they yield an invincible attestation to the truth and divinity of the laws thus attested and confirmed, and manifestly show them to have proceeded from God. And it cannot without the highest absurdity be supposed, that such glorious exhibitions of the divine power and majesty should ever have been given in favour of an imposture.

I shall next proceed to consider what our author offers against the divine original of the law of Moses from the authority of St. Paul, and the pretended opposition and inconsistency between that law and the New Testament.

CHAPTER III.

The Author's Arguments against the law of Moses from the Authority of St. Paul considered. Our Saviour Jesus Christ, and the Apostle Paul, strongly assert and confirm the divine original of the Law of Moses. The diminishing and degrading manner in which that Apostle seems sometimes to speak of that Law, accounted for. The Instances the Author produces to show that there was no end of the Law but what the Apostle expressly contradicts, examined. The attempt he makes to prove that there was no such Typical or Mystical Sense of the Law as St. Paul supposes in his Arguing with the Jews. No Absurdity, but a Beauty and Harmony in supposing that what is obscurely hinted at in the Law is more clearly revealed in the Gospel.

THIS author proposes the question to be debated, 'whether the positive and ceremonial law of Moses, commonly called the Levitical Law, or the law concerning their priesthood, was originally a divine institution or revelation from God, to be afterwards nullified, abolished, and set aside by another revelation; or whether it was a mere piece of carnal worldly policy.' This latter part of the question is what he undertakes to maintain, and which is more extraordinary, he declares, that 'if he cannot make it appear that St. Paul, when he comes to be rightly understood, is plainly on his side, he will give up the argument.' p. 23.

He manages this in a great many words with some digressions from p. 24 to p. 80; but though he seems in putting the question to confine it to the part of the law of Moses that relates to the priesthood, yet it is plain he intends it against the divine original of the whole law; and his arguments, if they prove any thing, prove that it was wholly a political institution; and that no part of it came by immediate revelation from God. And it is evident either the whole law was by immediate revelation from God, or no part of it was so, since Moses equally professed to receive the whole from God; and the many extraordinary miraculous attestations that were given to it, if they confirmed that law at all, extended equally to the confirmation of the whole.

Before I enter on the particular consideration of what this writer offers on this head, I shall first show that the apostle Paul did himself believe, and all along in the plainest manner suppose and assert, that the law of Moses was originally a divine institution or revelation from God. And no words can be more strong and full to this purpose than that remarkable passage, 2 Tim. iii. 15, 16. He is there writing to his beloved Timothy a little before his own death, whom this author represents as the only teacher in that age, who heartily joined with the apostle Paul as his faithful helper and fellow-labourer, p. 72. And was of the same opinion with him in the controversy concerning the law of Moses, in opposition to the Christian Jews. The apostle might therefore use freedom with

him, and was under no temptation to disguise his sentiments to him, as our author insinuates he was frequently obliged to do on other occasions. And he there commends Timothy, for that from a child he had known the Holy Scriptures; and declares that they were able to make him wise unto salvation. Where by the holy Scriptures he incontestably refers to the writings of the Old Testament, viz. those of Moses and the prophets, which were the only Scriptures Timothy could have been acquainted with from his childhood. And he adds, that all Scripture (or the whole Scripture) 'is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.' No declaration can possibly be plainer for the divine authority and inspiration of Moses and the prophets, whose writings he manifestly understands by what he there calls the Scripture. And indeed nothing is more usual with this apostle in all his epistles, than when he brings passages out of the law of Moses to call it the Scripture, and cite it as of divine authority; see Rom. iv. 3, ix. 17; Gal. iii. 8, iv. 30; 1 Tim. v. 8. And having occasion to mention a particular command of the law of Moses, and which seemed to be of a civil nature, he supposes that God gave that command, 1 Cor. ix. 9. He mentions it as the signal advantage of the Jews above the Gentiles, 'that unto them were committed the oracles of God,' Rom. iii. 1, 2. And of those oracles the law of Moses was certainly regarded as a principal part, Acts vii. 38. And again, that to them, viz. the Jews, 'pertained the covenant, and the giving of the law, and the service of God,' Rom. ix. 4, where he evidently refers to the Levitical Service and worship. In the whole epistle to the Hebrews, where it is his great design to show the supreme excellency of the evangelical dispensation above the Mosaical, he all along evidently supposes the law of Moses, and the manner of worship and divine service there prescribed, to have been originally from God, and of divine appointment. He expressly saith, that 'Christ Jesus was faithful to him that appointed him, as also Moses was faithful in all his house,' Heb. iii. 2, 5. Where it is undeniably evident, that he supposes that God sent and appointed Moses as truly as he did Jesus Christ, and that Moses was faithful, and kept close to what God had appointed. With respect particularly to the Levitical priesthood, he supposes this to have been of divine institution, and that Aaron was called of God to be high priest, and did not take this honour unto himself, Heb. v. 4, and viii. 5, he saith, 'the priests under the law serve to the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle; for see, (saith he) that thou make all things according to the pattern showed to thee in the mount.' Where he expressly represents Moses as receiving orders from God by divine revelation relating to the sanctuary and priesthood. And when he set himself to prove Heb. viii., that the first covenant, that is, the Mosaical economy was abolished, he still supposes at the same time, that it had God for its author, as well as the second more excellent and perfect dispensation that was to

succeed it. And this also appears from the quotation he produced from the prophet Jeremiah to prove it ; ' Behold the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Judah, not according to the covenant which I made with their fathers, when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt,' Heb. viii. 8, 9, 10 ; see also Heb. ix—20. Where it is plainly implied and asserted that God was the author of the first covenant, made with the children of Israel by the hand of Moses.

From all this I think it is evident as the plainest words can make it, that the apostle Paul still represents the Mosaical law, and particularly that part of it relating to the priesthood and ceremonies to have been originally a divine institution. And indeed in this belief he only followed the sentiments of his great Lord and Master Jesus Christ, who in all his discourses to the people and to his own disciples, whenever he hath occasion to mention the law of Moses, always speaks of it in a manner that shows he regarded it as originally of divine appointment. He declares in the most express manner that he ' came not to destroy the law and the prophets, but to fulfil them ;' that is, he came not to deny and subvert their divine authority, but to fulfil the true and proper design and end of them ; to confirm and perfect the moral precepts, to fulfil and give the substance of the types and ceremonies, which the apostle tells us were the ' shadow of good things to come, but the body is of Christ,' and to accomplish the predictions there contained. And he declares that ' till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or tittle should not pass away from the law till all be fulfilled,' Matt. v. 17, 18 ; Luke xvi. 17. And I do not know whether any words could more strongly assert its divine original, and that no part of it should fail of its just accomplishment. He severely reproves the Pharisees for ' teaching for doctrines the commandments of men,' and making ' void the law of God by their traditions ;' and by the law of God he understands the commandments given by Moses, which he there calls the commandments of God, and the word of God, in opposition to human inventions and traditions, Mark xii. 3, 9, 13. In the remarkable parable of the rich man and Lazarus, he refers them to the law of Moses and the prophets, as exhibiting a sufficient signification of the divine will, and that if they did not hear, that is, believe and obey them, neither would they ' be persuaded though one rose from the dead,' Luke xvi. 29—31. He tells the Sadducees, that they erred, ' not knowing the Scriptures, and the power of God,' and he explains what he means by the Scriptures, by referring to the book of Moses, Mark xii. 24—26. And lastly, after his resurrection, when ' beginning at Moses and the prophets, he expounded to his disciples in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself,' Luke xxiv. 39. And again, when he said to them, ' These are the words which I spake unto you, whilst I was with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the Law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the Psalms concerning me,' ver. 44,

45. Can any thing be a plainer proof, that he would have his disciples regard the writings of Moses and the prophets as of divine original, and containing a true revelation from God ?

Having thus shown that the apostle Paul, in conformity to the example of our blessed Saviour himself, asserted the divine original of the law of Moses, let us now consider the account this writer gives of the opinion of that great apostle in this matter, by whose judgment he pretends he is willing to be determined.

He represents it as the sense of the apostle Paul, that 'the ritual and ceremonial law of Moses was *carnal, worldly, and deadly*, and in its original, proper and literal sense had neither any thing of truth or goodness in it, but was a blinding enslaving constitution, and such an intolerable yoke of darkness and bondage, tyranny and vassalage, wrath and misery, that neither they nor their fathers were able to bear. And how St. Paul could declare all this, with any notion or belief of the ritual ceremonial law and priesthood, as a divine institution or revelation from God, he would be glad to know, pp. 29, 30, and he asks, p. 32, whether God can 'establish iniquity by a law,' or whether a law, which in St. Paul's opinion introduced and confirmed a state of civil and religious blindness and bigotry, tyranny and slavery, could in the same judgment have been originally a divine institution and an immediate revelation from God ? and he observes that it was not only the abuses of the law that he lays his charge against, but that it was the law itself, in its own intrinsic constitution and natural tendency, that in St. Paul's language and style was '*carnal, worldly, and deadly*.' He thinks these to be plain declarations that 'such a law could never be of divine institution, and consequently there needed no new revelation to set it aside,' pp. 51, 52. And whereas, 'St. Paul argues for setting aside the obligation of the ceremonial law, because it was fulfilled, abolished, and done away, by the death of Christ ; and because the law having been originally intended only as a figure and type of the better things to come, that is, of Christ and the gospel dispensation, it was hereby to cease, and to be abolished for ever :' this writer takes upon him to affirm, that 'he did not argue thus from the truth of things, and on the foot of any revelation from God in that case made to him, but argued *ad hominem* only against the Jews, as endeavouring upon prudential and political principles to set aside that absurd, tyrannical, blinding, and enslaving law of his country. For that the ceremonial law never had any repeal or abrogation by any new revelation he thinks is plain from the practice of St. Paul himself, who when he could not carry this point of setting aside and abrogating the ceremonial law ; submitted to it as long as he lived, as did all the Jewish proselytes in the apostolical times : he submitted to it, not as binding the conscience in point of religion and acceptance with God, but in his political capacity, as the law of his country, and as a matter of human liberty. Whereas had he thought it an original, immediate, positive institution from God, and afterwards nulled and abrogated by the same authority, he could not have submitted to it, consist-

ent with his declared judgment and conscience,' p. 52—54. Finally he declares, that the truth is, 'St. Paul was the great free-thinker of his age, the bold and brave defender of reason against authority, in opposition to those who had set up a wretched scheme of superstition, blindness and slavery, contrary to all reason and common sense, and this under the specious pretence of a divine institution and revelation from God,' p. 71.

Before I proceed to a distinct consideration of what this writer here offers, I would first observe what a strange representation he makes of the apostle Paul, at the same time that he affects to commend and to admire him, and pretends to have as good an opinion of that great apostle as any man can have, p. 21. It cannot be denied that in all his epistles he cites the Mosaical and prophetic writings as of divine authority; he delivered those writings to all the churches of the Gentiles among whom he preached, and whom he instructed in the Christian religion, under the notion of Scripture, or divinely inspired writings; and yet at the same time, according to this author, he was persuaded that the law of Moses was no revelation from God at all, but a pernicious imposture put upon the world, in the name of God; a mere piece of carnal policy, and one of the most absurd and tyrannical and unreasonable constitutions that were ever imposed upon any nation. Again, he declared that many of the rites of the law of Moses, in their original intention, were of a figurative and typical nature, designed to prefigure Christ, and his benefits, and to be 'the shadow of good things to come;' whereas, according to this writer he himself knew and believed that they had no such original intention and design at all. 'He insisted upon it that he had received an immediate revelation from God' concerning the abrogating the ceremonial law, as our author himself acknowledges, p. 79, and yet he represents him as having proceeded wholly upon political and prudential principles; and that he himself well knew he had received no revelation from God at all relating to that matter, but only made the Jews believe so, that he might the better carry his point with them. I cannot see how a man that could prevaricate at so strange a rate, could deserve to be called a 'bold and brave defender' of religion and liberty; or how this is consistent with the character he elsewhere gives of him, that he 'was a man of the strictest honesty and integrity,' p. 69. I know not what scheme of morals our moral philosopher hath formed to himself for the regulating of his own conduct; but such a conduct is no way suitable to the character of the apostle Paul, or the principles upon which he acted. He was far from allowing that maxim, that it is lawful 'to do evil that good may come of it.' He rejects the imputation of it with the utmost abhorrence, and passes a most severe censure on those that govern themselves by such maxims, for he pronounces that their 'damnation is just,' Rom. iii. 8. Though he always showed the greatest condescension and tenderness for weak consciences, yet he never allowed himself in deliberate fraud and imposture, or to do things contrary to truth and good conscience, under pretence of complying

with their prejudices. He manifested on all occasions an unshaken and unparalleled fortitude and constancy in the cause of God, and truth, and religion, even though he exposed himself by it to the greatest sufferings. In a word, he could say, that his 'rejoicing was this, the testimony of his conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not in fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, he had his conversation in the world,' 2 Cor. i. 12. It is certain therefore this excellent apostle was incapable of a conduct so little reconcileable to truth or common honesty, as that which this writer ascribes to him. And therefore those expressions in which he seems to speak in disadvantageous terms of the law of Moses, could never be intended by him in that sense which our author thinks fit to put upon them, and which is directly contrary to his declared sentiments.

But let us consider this matter more distinctly. It is plain that the apostle Paul had a great controversy relating to the law of Moses with some Judaizing teachers of that age, to which he refers in almost all his epistles. There were many that had then conceived a very high and extravagant opinion of that law, as so absolutely perfect in itself that it was never to be changed or altered, nor any of its rites abrogated; but was to be of standing perpetual obligation, and was to extend to all nations; that a strict observance of all the commands and ritual disjunctions there prescribed, was the only way of justification and obtaining the favour of God, and that without this the Gentiles themselves could not be saved. This was the doctrine of the persons mentioned, Acts xv. 24, and of those against whom the apostle argues in his epistle to the Galatians, who *constrained* the Christian converts *to be circumcised*, and to observe the Law, that is, obliged them to it as absolutely necessary to salvation, even though they had been Gentiles.

Now in opposition to these persons St. Paul doth not allege, as this author would have it, that the law of Moses was not originally of Divine institution. For this he all along supposes, yea, and directly and strongly asserts it, as hath been shown; but that it was never designed to be of *perpetual* obligation; that it was an *imperfect* dispensation, suited to the imperfect state of the Church, and fell greatly *short* of the clear light, the spiritual glory, and perfect liberty of the Gospel. That in the intention of God, and in its original proper design, the law was a *temporary* subservient dispensation, designed to make way for a more pure and spiritual and perfect dispensation, of which Christ was the author. That therefore these false teachers greatly mistook and perverted the original design of that law, and the end for which it was given; and that taken in their perverted sense, and as opposed by them to the grace of the Gospel, it would prove of bad consequence to those that put their trust in it, and expected justification from it. But he abhors the charge as if he supposed the law to be *sin*, or to bring *death* in its own nature, see Rom. vii. 7—13, which yet is the representation this writer thinks fit to make of the apostle's sense; as if he held the law to be in itself *deadly*, and that the es-

tablishing the Mosaic constitution was 'establishing iniquity by a law.' He expressly denies that in its original constitution and design it was all 'against the promises of God,' Gal. iii. 21. And upon the whole shows that it was designed for a time till 'the seed should come, to whom the promise was made,' Gal. iii. 19, and its rites and ordinances were 'imposed until the time of reformation,' Heb. ix. 10; that is, till the introducing that more perfect dispensation to which the other was intended to be subservient and preparatory. That the Jews were kept *under it, shut up*, or separated from other nations, under its strict discipline and injunctions, 'till the faith should be revealed,' Gal. iii. 23. And that now Christ was come, he hath 'abolished the law of commandments,' and hath taken down the 'partition wall' between Jews and Gentiles, Eph. xi. 15; so that now we are no longer 'under the law,' but 'under grace,' Rom. vi. 14. This is evidently the apostle Paul's scheme, the doctrine which he teacheth with regard to the law of Moses. In which, directly contrary to what the writer alleges, it is plainly supposed that the law of Moses was originally a *divine* institution or revelation from God, which was afterwards abolished and set aside by another revelation: though it was not so *immediately* and expressly abolished as to render it absolutely unlawful for any persons at that time to observe those legal rites. The apostle Paul was for showing great condescension to those believing Jews, who though they looked for salvation through the mercy of God in Jesus Christ, yet from a conscientious scruple were for observing the Mosaical rites themselves, but did not impose them upon the Gentiles. And he thought it lawful on some occasions to observe those rites himself in condescension to their infirmities. And his practice and sentiments in this matter were agreeable to those of the other apostles. Whilst in the mean time care was taken by the doctrine they all taught, to remove the prejudices of the Jewish Christians, and to give them a full view of the liberty with which Christ came to make them free. But I shall have occasion to consider this at large, and set the conduct of the apostle Paul and the other apostles in a proper light, and show the harmony there was between them, when I come more particularly to examine the objections the author raises on this head against the New Testament.

Let us consider what he produces to prove, that St. Paul, contrary to his own express declarations, did not look upon the law of Moses to be of divine original. And what he seems chiefly to insist upon is the disadvantageous character the apostle gives of that law, representing it as a 'yoke of bondage,' and its ordinances as 'carnal,' &c. But it is not hard to account for the manner in which he speaks of the law of Moses, if we keep his scheme and design in view.

It is certain that the apostle represents those that are under the law as in a state of 'bondage,' and a subjection to his rites he calls a 'yoke of bondage.' This our author often repeats, as if it was in St. Paul's opinion, 'an enslaving constitution contrary to the

natural rights and liberties of mankind, a state of civil and religious tyranny and slavery, an intolerable yoke which neither they nor their fathers were able to bear.' It is to be observed that these last expressions which the author ascribes to the apostle Paul, p. 29, and which are at least as strong as any that he makes use of, were used not by him but by St. Peter, Acts xv. 10; and yet this writer himself will not pretend that Peter intended by these expressions to signify that the law of Moses was not of divine original; since all along he supposes him to be at the head of the Judaizing Christians, who stood up for the divine authority and obligation of that law in opposition to St. Paul. All that he intends to signify by this manner of expression, is only that the ritual injunctions and ceremonies of the law were difficult and *burdensome* in the observance; and it is a way of speaking common almost to all languages for persons to be said not to be able to *bear* a thing which they cannot bear without great labour and difficulty. And yet those numerous rites prescribed in the law, however burdensome they might be in the observance, were instituted for very wise ends and valuable purposes, and were very proper for the state of the Church and people to whom they were given. And this is what the apostle Paul plainly signifies even in that very passage where he represents the being 'under the law' as a state of 'bondage,' Gal. iv. 3, 9. He had observed in the preceding chapter, ver. 24, 25, that 'the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, but after that faith is come we are no longer under a schoolmaster. Where it is evident that he speaks not merely of the *moral* law as the author would have it, p. 26, but of the *ceremonial* law. And in pursuance of the same metaphor he saith, ch. iv. 1—3, 'Now I say that the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be Lord of all; but is under tutors and governors, until the time appointed of the Father, even so we when we were children were in bondage under the elements of the world. Where it is plain what he means by 'bondage,' not that the law is 'a blinding enslaving constitution, contrary to the natural rights and liberties of mankind,' but is such a bondage as an heir is under whilst he is a child, the bondage of being under tutors and governors, and subject to a discipline, which, though it may seem hard and severe, yet is useful and necessary; so the various injunctions of the law, though they might seem a troublesome yoke, yet were very useful and well suited to the state of the Church, at the time in which it was given. But as it would be wrong to keep the heir in such a subjection, and under the discipline of a child, when he is out of his non-age, and arrived to a state of maturity; and it would argue a very strange and mean temper of mind for him to be willing to put himself under that pædagogical again, or to exercise himself in his childish rudiments, when he had obtained his manly freedom; so it would be a strange conduct when we are freed by the Gospel from the pædagogical of the law, and brought under a more manly and perfect dispensation to be willing to return to it again. On this account he might justly expostulate as he does, ver. 9, 'How

turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, wherunto ye desire again to be in bondage?' and 'Stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage,' ch. v. 1.

And whereas in the passage now cited, Gal. iv. 3, the apostle calls the Mosaic rites the 'elements of the world,' and 'weak and beggarly elements,' and elsewhere calls its ordinances 'carnal ordinances,' Heb. ix. 10, it is evident that his design is not to signify that the ceremonial law was not originally a *divine* institution, but a 'mere piece of carnal worldly policy,' which is the interpretation this writer puts upon those expressions: but as he compares their being under the law to an heir's being under the discipline of tutors and governors whilst he is a child, so carrying on the same metaphor he calls the Mosaic rites, the *elements* or *rudiments* of the world. As an heir 'is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the Father; even so when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world.' It is an allusion to the way of instructing children; he calls them 'the elements *στοιχία*;' so the grammarians call the first principles or letters, out of which the syllables are compounded that are afterwards formed into words. So that he compares the being under the legal rites, to children's beginning first to learn their letters, or being entered into their first rudiments. And he calls them 'the elements' or 'rudiments of the world,' to signify that with respect to the matter of them they were taken from the things of this world, and were of an inferior earthly nature compared with the more sublime and spiritual dispensation of the Gospel. Under the law the people were instructed in a manner suitable to their state of childish weakness; for they were as yet imperfect and rude in the knowledge of religion, nor fitted for the simplicity of a pure and spiritual institution, in which there were but few external rites. It pleased God, therefore, to deal with them as children, and to exercise their obedience by employing them in many inferior ritual services in condescension to their infirmity, till the proper season came for their being raised to a more pure and noble and spiritual worship. Maimonides gives pretty much the same account, and yet, I believe, nobody will pretend to say that he denied the law of Moses to be of divine original, or looked upon it to be a mere piece of carnal worldly policy. He supposes that as God did not bring the Israelites directly, and all at once into Canaan, but after a long circuit through the wilderness, so he did not give the people the best and most exalted scheme of religion at first, but such as they were capable of. He condescended to their weakness, and brought them on gradually as they could bear it, that they might arrive at last to the thing he principally aimed at, right apprehensions of him, and the effectual forsaking of idolatry. This is the substance of a remarkable passage in Maimonides, More Nevoch. p. iii. cap. 32. And in the same chapter he also observes, that as because animals, when they are born are tender and not fit to be nourished with dry or strong meat, therefore God

hath provided milk for them, that by such a kind of moist diet suited to the temperament of their bodies they might be nourished, till by degrees they obtain strength and firmness ; so there is something like this in the manner of government of the great and good God with regard to several things in the law. And he applies this observation particularly to some of the rites there prescribed, and to the pompous external way of worship by priests, temple, and sacrifices, which he supposes to be instituted in condescension to their weakness, because the people could not then bear a more spiritual and exalted way of worship.

It appears then that in the judgment of the wisest among the Jews themselves, who are most zealous for the divine authority of the law of Moses, the representation the apostle Paul makes of the *comparative* imperfection of the law of Moses as a dispensation suited to the weakness and to the imperfect state of the Church and people at that time, was not inconsistent with the belief of its having been originally appointed by God himself. But especially the consistency of this appears if it be farther considered that the apostle represents the legal rites not only as instituted in condescension to their weakness, but at the same time as designed and contrived by divine wisdom to be ‘ shadows and types of good things to come,’ and preparatory to a more excellent and perfect state of things that was to be introduced under the Messiah.

When, therefore, he calls the legal rites ‘ weak and beggarly elements or rudiments,’ he speaks in opposition to those who extravagantly extolled these rites as in themselves so perfect and excellent, that they were never to be abolished, or to give way to a more perfect dispensation. And it is in the same view that he declares concerning the law, that it was ‘ weak and unprofitable,’ Heb. vii. 18, 19. ‘ There was a disannulling of the commandment going before for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof.’ He doth not intend by this to intimate as if it was in its original design absolutely unprofitable and good for nothing ; for we find that elsewhere in answer to that question, ‘ What advantage then hath the Jew ? or what profit is there in circumcision ?’ he answers, ‘ much every way ! chiefly because that unto them were committed the oracles of God,’ Rom. iii. 1, 2 ; and by the oracles of God we are there in a special manner to understand the law of Moses, who, as St. Stephen speaks, ‘ received the lively oracles to give unto us,’ Acts vii. 38. But what the apostle means by there calling the law especially relating to the priesthood ‘ weak and unprofitable,’ he himself explains in the words immediately following : for he adds, ‘ that the law made nothing perfect,’ and a little before he had showed that ‘ perfection was not by the Levitical priesthood,’ ver. 2. His design is to signify that the Mosaical economy was never intended to be the *last* and most *perfect* dispensation, and therefore it was wrong to set it up as of absolute necessity, and of universal and perpetual obligation ; but it was designed to prepare and make way for a more glorious and perfect dispensation which was to succeed it.

In like manner, when he calls the *ordinances* under the law

‘carnal ordinances, *δικαιώματα σαρκός*, ordinances of the flesh,’ or relating to the flesh, Heb. ix. 10: his meaning is not as this writer seems willing to understand it, as if they were in themselves of an *evil* corrupt nature and tendency, which is sometimes the import of the word *carnal* in Scripture, but merely as he himself explains it, ver. 13, that they ‘sanctified to the purifying of the flesh,’ and could not of themselves, and by any virtue of their own, *purge* the *soul* or *conscience* from sin, but were the types and shadows of greater and better things; and therefore in that very passage he supposes them to be ‘imposed till the times of reformation,’ that is, till the bringing in of a more perfect scheme of religion, for which the other was designed to be preparatory.

The same observation may be applied to that passage where he calls the law establishing the Levitical priesthood ‘the law of a carnal commandment,’ he is far from intending to signify by that expression that it was a mere political engine and *human* invention; for he evidently supposes that commandment to be from God in the very passage where he calls it a ‘carnal commandment;’ but he calls it so because it related to a priesthood managed by frail mortal *men*, and was a commandment of a *temporary* nature. That this is his meaning there is evident from the opposition he puts between ‘the law of a carnal commandment and the power of an endless life,’ Heb. vii. 16, where he saith, ‘That Christ was made a priest, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life.’ And again, ver. 28, ‘the law maketh men high-priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath which was since the law, maketh the Son, who was consecrated for evermore.’

Upon the whole, if we will allow the apostle Paul to explain himself, it manifestly appears, that when he speaks of the law of Moses in seemingly disparaging terms, it never was his intention by any of those expressions, to insinuate that the law of Moses was not of divine original, for he every where supposes that it was ordained and appointed by God himself; but in opposition to those who set it up for a complete and perfect dispensation, he shows the comparative imperfection of it when set in competition with that more perfect dispensation which our Saviour introduced by the Gospel, and to which it was designed to be preparatory. Thus he saith speaking of the Mosaical economy, that ‘that which was glorious had no glory in this respect by reason of the glory that excelleth,’ 2 Cor. iii. 10, where he represents it as having ‘no glory,’ not absolutely, for he there expressly saith that it ‘was glorious;’ but it had no glory when compared to the more perfect *excelling* glory of the Gospel dispensation. In like manner the other expressions he makes use of with regard to the law are not to be understood in a strict and absolute, but in a comparative sense.

But this writer further argues, that the apostle Paul could not look upon the law of Moses to be of divine institution, because he teaches things directly contrary to that law. He says, ‘the plain

truth of the matter was, that St. Paul preached a new doctrine contrary to Moses and the prophets,' p. 41. But it is certain that if the apostle Paul himself may be depended on for giving a right account of his own sentiments, 'He believed all things which are written in the law and the prophets,' Acts xxiv. 14; and he said, 'none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come,' Acts xxvi. 22. He preached a new doctrine indeed, and published a new dispensation, but not contrary unto, but perfectly consistent with Moses and the prophets, to which they were designed to be preparatory and subservient.

But let us see how he proves the charge. He goes on to say, 'that there is not one end, use, or purpose of the ritual law as declared by Moses, but what is directly contradicted and denied by this apostle.' This he proves, 'first, because Moses delivered the whole law to the Israelites as a perpetual standing ordinance or everlasting covenant between God and them throughout all their generations to the end of the world; St. Paul, on the contrary, declares it to be only an occasional temporary thing, never intended for perpetuity, but to last only for a few ages,' p. 241. But it does not appear from Moses that the law was designed for perpetuity, so as never to give way to another dispensation, as if God himself would never change or abrogate any of these laws; nor does he any where say, as this writer represents it, that the law was to continue to be observed by them 'to the end of the world.' That the Hebrew phrase which we translate for 'ever' and 'everlasting,' does not always signify a perpetual duration, or a duration to the end of the world, is so well known, that it is unworthy of any man that pretends to learning to draw an argument merely from those expressions. If Moses had expressly called the whole law 'an everlasting covenant,' which he nowhere does, no argument could be drawn from it to show that it was intended to continue to the end of the world. To Abraham's seed the land of Canaan is promised for 'an everlasting possession,' Gen. xxvii. 8; and yet Moses expressly foretels that they should be expelled that land 'and scattered among all nations.' Nor does that other phrase, 'throughout all their generations, prove that it was designed to be of perpetual and unalterable obligation; though Moses never uses that word 'throughout all their generations,' speaking of the observation of the law or any of its ordinances, but only that it should be observed 'throughout their generations,' or as it is often expressed, 'in their generations.' And that this phrase is not necessarily to be understood of a perpetual duration, or a duration to the end of the world, is evident from many passages. Thus the psalmist observes, speaking of rich worldlings, 'their inward thought is that their houses shall continue for ever, and their dwelling places to all generations,' Psalm xlix. 11. Not as if they thought their houses would continue in strictness to the end of the world, which no man in his senses could once suppose, but that they should continue for a long time to them and to their posterity after them. See also Lev. xxv. 29, 30. It was not proper that it should be expressly

declared in the law itself that it was an occasional *temporary* dispensation only to continue for a time. This might have diminished their regard for the law, and they might, upon this pretence, have thrown off the observance of it before the proper season came. The plain design of those phrases, that they were to observe the legal ordinances 'for ever,' and 'throughout their generations,' was to signify to them that they were to observe them always in their successive generations, till God should signify his will to the contrary; that it was to last for ever, so as never to be abrogated by any human authority; nor were the people themselves to cast off the obligation of it merely by an act of their own upon any pretence whatsoever. But that they might expect a new law and new injunctions from God, Moses himself signifies to them as plainly as was proper for him in that remarkable passage, Deut. xviii. 17—19, where he tells the people that the Lord their God would 'raise up from the midst of them a prophet like unto him,' and that unto him should 'they hearken;' and that 'God would put his words into his mouth,' and 'he should speak unto them all that God should command him; and that it should come to pass, that whosoever would not hearken unto his words, God would require it of him.' It is expressly said concerning the ordinary subsequent prophets which 'arose in Israel, that none of them was like unto Moses,' Deut. xxxiv. 13; and God himself declares how much Moses was superior to the other prophets, Numb. xii. 5—8; but here Moses tells the people that God would raise up from among them a 'prophet like unto him,' that is, not an ordinary prophet, but one of peculiar eminence, that should, like Moses, give them laws in the name of God himself, and to whom they were indispensably obliged to hearken, and to pay an entire obedience. This was sufficient to have directed them to look for another *law-giver*, and might naturally lead their thoughts to the promised Messiah, of whom they had an expectation derived to them from their fathers. And afterwards, as the time drew nearer, the abolition of the law of Moses was more plainly signified. The prophets indeed intimated clearly enough that a new dispensation was to be introduced, and a *new covenant*, different from that which 'God made with their fathers, when he brought them out of the land of Egypt,' Jer. xxxi. 31, 32. The ceasing of the Aaronical priesthood, and consequently of the law of Moses, is signified, when it is foretold with the greatest solemnity that God would raise up a glorious person 'to be a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedek,' Ps. cx. 4, Heb. vii. 12; and that God's *name* should be *great* among the Gentiles, 'from the rising of the sun to the going down of the same,' and that in 'every place incense should be offered to his name and a pure offering,' Mal. i. 2, which supposes the law of Moses abrogated, which confined the offering up of incense to the sanctuary and temple. And indeed the very nature of the law itself, according to which a considerable part of the ordinances and rites there prescribed were to be entirely confined to the land of Canaan, and not to be observed any where out of that land, sufficiently shows that

it was not originally designed to be of invariable continuance, nor fitted in the nature of the thing for universal and perpetual obligation.

Again, another instance produced by this writer of the apostle Paul contradicting Moses is this : ' That Moses every where most expressly establishes *propitiations* and atonements for sin by the blood of beasts, and declares upon the action of the priest in sprinkling the sacrificial blood, the atonement should be made, and the offence forgiven; and ordains daily and annual sacrifices for the sins of the whole people, and this without the least hint or intimation of any type or farther reference. But St. Paul, on the contrary, declares it is impossible for the blood of bulls or goats ' to take away sins ;' and condemns this literal sense of the law as a scheme of natural blindness and bondage that cannot consist either with the civil or religious rights or liberties of mankind.'

That Moses establishes *propitiations* and atonements for sin by the blood of beasts, will be readily acknowledged; and if this author could prove that the apostle Paul denies that such sacrifices had been ever appointed by God at all, this would contradict Moses, who prescribes them as of divine appointment. But on the contrary, it is evident that the apostle all along supposes that these sacrifices had been appointed by God himself through the ministry of Moses. He represents them, indeed, as now abolished, but this is only to say, that the Mosaic law is no longer obligatory, and that God hath not thought fit to require those sacrifices under the New Testament. As to what he adds, ' that Moses declares that the atonement should be made and the offence forgiven upon the action of the priest in sprinkling the sacrificial blood, without the least hint or intimation of any type or farther reference. Whereas the apostle declares it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sin.' The apostle himself plainly shows us how to reconcile these, by declaring that the gifts and sacrifices under the law ' sanctified to the purifying of the flesh ;' and this external atonement is what Moses intends as the immediate consequence of the priests sprinkling the blood. The person thereupon was *legally* clean and free, but he never intended to signify that merely upon the outward act done of the priest's sprinkling the sacrificial blood, the man's *conscience* was immediately purged from the guilt of sin, without *repentance* and new obedience. For the necessity of repentance and obedience in order to forgiveness and acceptance with God is strongly represented in the law. The case then with respect to those sacrifices stands thus : The outward act of offering the sacrifice, and the priests sprinkling the blood when done as the law prescribes, was an external atonement or expiation, by which the person was outwardly and legally cleansed from the guilt he had contracted. Besides which to the truly penitent and sincere this rite was an outward sign or pledge of God's pardon and acceptance. And if the apostle Paul may be allowed a better interpreter of the design of those sacrifices than this writer, one great end for which they were instituted was to *prefigure* that of Christ, and by those

typical atonements to prepare them for that great propitiation of infinite virtue which he was to offer for the sins of the world. And if this was one primary intention of that part of the Mosaic law, it gives us a more comprehensive view of the wisdom of this constitution. It shows those sacrifices to have been originally appointed by God himself, and that the great end of them is now fulfilled, and consequently that this part of the law of Moses, instead of being contrary to the Gospel, was designed to be subservient to it. And as to the exception he makes that Moses himself gives no intimation of any type or farther reference, it shall be considered afterwards when I come more particularly to examine what he offers concerning the *mystical* sense of that law.

The next instance he produceth to prove that the law of Moses is contradicted and denied by the apostle Paul is absolutely misrepresented. For it nowhere appears that 'Moses commanded all idolatry to be exterminated by fire and sword, not only in Canaan, but all the rest of the world, as far as his people should have it in their power, of which he was very confident.' And as to the particular law about the punishment of idolaters in the Jewish commonwealth, this, with the author's pretence that it is inconsistent with the rights of private judgment and liberty of conscience, shall be considered afterwards.

The last instance he produceth to show the contradiction and inconsistency between the doctrine of the apostle Paul, and the law of Moses, amounts to no more than this, 'that the Levitical order of priesthood is now abolished, and that the apostle Paul declares it to be so;' which will be easily granted. But at the same time, it is certain that even when he argues that the priesthood is now changed, he still plainly shows that he looked upon it to have been originally of divine appointment. And though he nowhere expressly declares in what particular way the Christian ministry is to be maintained, yet it is not true, as this author alleges, that he 'leaves the Christian ministry to subsist only upon charity,' if by that he meant that it is a matter of mere courtesy; for it is certain he insists upon it as a matter of right, and declares that the 'Lord hath ordained that those that preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel.'

The author might, at this rate of arguing, have produced most of the particular constitutions of the law of Moses which are no longer in force under the Gospel, and from thence have argued a contradiction and inconsistency between the Gospel and the law. But all that follows from it is, that the legal economy is now abrogated with its peculiar rites and injunctions. But it does not follow that therefore our Lord Jesus Christ and his apostles believed that it was not originally of divine institution: except it could be proved that God can never give any *occasional* injunctions, which are to last only for a time; or that all his laws must be as himself immutable; or that that cannot be fit and proper at one time, or in one circumstance of things, which is not so in another: the contrary to which this writer himself acknowledges, p. 207, where,

having observed 'that all wise states and governments have ever found it necessary to abrogate and alter the old, or to enact new laws, according to mutable and variable relations and circumstances of persons in Society,' he adds, that 'this will equally hold good, when applied to the laws of God himself. For what God would require at one time under such particular relations and circumstances, he would not require at another time under other relations, and quite different or contrary circumstances.' From whence it is manifest that his argument to show an inconsistency between the law of Moses and the Christian religion is explained by St. Paul, because many things that were required in the one are abrogated by the other, hath nothing in it. It doth not follow that the Mosaic economy was not instituted by God, because many of its rites and constitutions were abrogated and superseded by a succeeding dispensation; when the circumstances of things were much altered from what they were at the first giving of the law, and the design for which that particular economy had been erected was answered and fulfilled.

I shall conclude this chapter with observing that this writer, in order to show an inconsistency between the law of Moses and the Gospel, absolutely denies any *mystical* or typical sense of the law of Moses, or that any of its rites had, in their original intention, any farther reference than the bare letter.

He asks, 'Whether there can be found any reason or foundation in all the writings of Moses, or his commentators the prophets, for that typical, figurative, and allegorical sense of the legal priesthood, sacrifices, and ceremonies which St. Paul supposes and argues upon in his reasonings against the Jews, in order to set aside this priesthood, and the law of ceremonies depending upon it, as fulfilled and accomplished in Christ?' And observes, in the passage I mentioned before, that 'Moses establishes propitiations and atonements for sin by the blood of beasts, and ordains sacrifices, without the least hint or intimation of any type or farther reference,' p. 41. And therefore he concludes that 'St. Paul's rejecting and renouncing the ceremonial law in its literal sense, when Moses had delivered and enforced it in no other sense was a plain declaration that such a law could never be of divine institution,' p. 51. But it is not true that the apostle Paul condemned and renounced the ceremonial law in its literal sense, if by that he meant that he supposed its rites literally taken not to have been instituted by God; for he all along supposes that even literally taken the legal rites and ordinances were of divine appointment, and were imposed upon the Jews by a divine authority to be observed by them 'until the times of reformation:' that is, till the last and most perfect dispensation should be introduced under the Messiah. But he argues that beside the literal they had a mystical sense, and that in instituting them the divine wisdom had a farther view, and designed them as *types* and *figures* of greater and better things under that more perfect dispensation that was to succeed.

And let us see what this author offers to prove that it was not

so. All his long discourse about the typical mystical sense of the law, amounts to no more than this. That 'there is not the least hint in the writings of Moses, or his commentators the prophets, of any such typical sense or reference; that such a mystical sense of the law and prophets was never known nor heard of among the Jews till after the days of Ezra, when the Jewish cabalists put what sense they pleased on those writings; and when they could not prove the new doctrines they advanced (amongst which he reckons that of the resurrection, a general judgment, and a state of future rewards and punishments) by the original literal sense of those writings, they introduced a mystical allegorical sense of their original books, and pretended an oral tradition to justify their arbitrary interpretations. That the apostle Paul and Christ himself argued with the Jews in their own way, and upon their own concessions, and justified the Gospel scheme upon the foot of Moses and the prophets, not from the proper original sense of the prophets themselves, but by mystical allegorical interpretations, for which there was really no foundation in the writings themselves of Moses and the prophets. And he asks why might not they take up the same principles against such men to introduce and establish the true religion, which they had made use of and applied to establish and perpetuate a false one?' This is the sum of what he saith from p. 43—51.

But if we should grant that there is no hint of any such mystical typical sense or reference in the law of Moses or the prophets, this would not prove that there was no such sense in the original intention of the Holy Ghost in giving these laws. For supposing such an original typical intention, it might not be proper to declare this in the law itself, or to let the people directly and expressly know that its rites were typical, the shadows and figures of good things to come under another and more perfect dispensation. This might have diminished their regard to the law, and have rendered them negligent in the observation of its injunctions, even when it was proper for good reasons that they should be kept close to the observation of them. Types might be originally intended, though not then explained and understood when they were first instituted. And there is no absurdity in supposing, that God whose wisdom penetrates through all ages, had some ends in view in instituting those rites and ceremonies, which he did not open all at once, but which were to be understood in the proper season: and particularly that he designed them among other ends, (for it is not pretended that it is the only end) for types and figures of good things to come, with a view that when the time came for accomplishing them, their apt correspondency might more fully appear. And indeed the typical sense and reference could not be well understood till the antitype came, by comparing it with which, the exact and beautiful harmony between both, and the wisdom of God in appointing it so, might be fully manifest. And who so proper in that case to explain the original sense intended by the Holy Ghost, as those who were inspired by the same divine Spirit?

I shall therefore beg leave to suppose that our Lord Jesus Christ and his apostles, particularly the apostle Paul, are more to be depended on for a just account of the original sense of Moses and the prophets, than this writer who confidently avers they had no such original typical sense and reference, though Christ and his apostles assure us they had.

But after all, it is not true, that there is not 'the least foundation in the writings of Moses or his commentators the prophets for that typical figurative sense of the legal priesthood, sacrifices and ceremonies, which St. Paul supposes and argues upon in order to set aside this priesthood, and the law of ceremonies depending upon it, as fulfilled and accomplished in Christ.' There are several hints concerning a Redeemer to come interspersed in the Mosaical writings, and still more in those of the prophets. He had been promised and foretold from the beginning at sundry times and in divers manners. This was the principal thing intended in the promise made to Abraham concerning 'all nations being blessed in his seed,' and so Abraham himself understood it, who, if we may believe our Saviour, 'saw his day and was glad.' Jacob spoke of him under the name of Shiloh. And the Israelites had derived to them from the patriarchs an expectation of this glorious person as one that should arise from among them. And this being the case the most wise and understanding of them might be naturally led to think that there was a farther view and reference to the great event, in many of the rites that were then prescribed, and in that particular constitution and polity that was then erected, especially since Moses himself directed their views this way, by telling them of 'another prophet whom God would raise up from the midst of them like unto him,' to whom they were to pay an entire obedience, and to observe whatsoever laws or commands he should bring them from God. The sacrifices, the chief part of the legal rites and services, are sometimes spoken of in the Old Testament, with a seeming contempt, as things in which God had no pleasure. It is certain these expressions were not intended to signify that God had not instituted or required those sacrifices at all: but it was natural to conclude from those expressions, that they were not instituted merely for their own sakes, but had a farther view and reference. Thus particularly in the fortieth Psalm, ver. 5, 6, the person there spoken of, after having plainly declared the insufficiency of the legal sacrifices, adds concerning himself, 'Then said I, lo, I come, in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O God.' Where he represents himself and his coming, as written of in the law. And this I think can scarce be understood to relate to any but the Messiah; of whom David often speaks, and of whom the apostle interprets it, Heb. x. 5—9, and if so, here is an instance to prove, that at the time when this Psalm was composed, which was in the days of David, many ages before Ezra, the law was understood, as having a reference to the Messiah. And in that passage there is also a plain intimation that the legal sacrifices were to cease, and to be abolished at the

Messiah's coming. But especially the liii. chapter of Isaiah, which the most ancient Jews interpreted of the Messiah, and which indeed cannot reasonably be understood of any other, points to a farther reference of the legal sacrifices, to be 'fulfilled and accomplished in Christ.' The prophet there speaks of him in phrases that properly related to sacrifices. As he describes the grievous sufferings he was to endure, so he represents them as having an expiatory virtue, and making an atonement for our sins. He represents him as 'bearing our iniquities,' and making 'his soul an offering for sin,' and that 'God laid upon him the iniquities of us all.' This ought to have led the Jews to look beyond the legal sacrifices and oblations, to that great propitiation of infinite virtue which was to be offered for our sins in the fulness of time, and of which those sacrifices were only the imperfect figures and shadows: and what the prophet here saith is perfectly agreeable to what St. Paul and the other apostles so often represent concerning our Lord Jesus Christ, as offering himself a 'sacrifice for our sins' and doing that in reality which the others only did in type and figure. Indeed the prophets in all their writings have numberless references to the Messiah, and there is no explaining many passages in those writings without such a reference. They often speak of things that literally, and in the first sense relate to their own time in terms which evidently have a farther view. And that they understood and explained the prophecies before them as typical of the Messiah, and often prophesied by types themselves, and intimated at the very time of delivering those prophecies that they were to be referred to him, is largely and fully shown in the bishop of Lichfield's learned defence of Christianity from the ancient prophecies, chap. iii.; sect. 1, 2, 3, 4. Whereas therefore this writer asserts over and over with great confidence, that what he calls the 'figurative spiritualizing sense' of the law and the prophets, was never heard of among the Jews before the days of Ezra, and that it had its first rise among the Jewish cabalistical doctors after that time: the contrary is rather true, that all along from the beginning, the law and the prophets were understood as containing a spiritual and mystical sense, and as having a farther view and reference. When Moses urges the people to 'circumcise the foreskin of their hearts,' Deut. x. 16, and again, speaks of God's 'circumcising their hearts that they might love him with all their heart and soul,' Deut. xxx. 6; here is a plain instance of a 'spiritual sense' in the law itself with regard to one of the principal rites there enjoined, the solemn rite of initiation into that peculiar polity. He here plainly directs them to carry their thoughts beyond the outward sign, and intimates to them that it had a farther view, even to signify the necessity of an inward purity, and of mortifying their corrupt affections and lusts. And indeed considering the frequent use of signs and symbols among the eastern nations, especially in the early ages, which were still supposed to contain some other significations under them, and to have a further view than the bare letter; and considering the high esteem they had of the great wisdom of

the law and the Mosaic institutions, every thing in which even the most minute rites were regarded as prescribed by God himself; and considering that an expectation of the Messiah, and of a more new and more glorious state of things under him, was still kept up among them: it was natural for them to think that there was a farther view and reference in that variety of legal rites, and sacrifices, and ceremonies, beyond what appeared in the bare letter. And it was because it had been all along a known and acknowledged principle in their nation, that many things in the law and the prophets had a farther view, that the Jewish doctors, after the time of Ezra, when immediate inspiration ceased, and there were no longer any extraordinary prophets among them, took occasion to introduce their *traditionary* explications. And it is probable some of these explications were agreeable to the true original sense derived from the prophets themselves, as Dr. Prideaux supposes, to whom this writer is pleased to refer us. Though in process of time they added many inventions, and arbitrary explications of their own, which never were originally intended. They supposed all along a frequent reference to the Messiah in the Mosaic and prophetic writings, and so far they were right in general, and undoubtedly they were so in the sense they give of many particular passages. Some considerable remains there are of these explications in the most ancient and approved Jewish writings; though the modern Jews would fain give a different turn to them to avoid the force of the arguments the Christians bring against them from these interpretations that they were made by their ancestors. It also appears from some passages in their approved writings, that they expected their own law to be more fully opened to them at the Messiah's coming, and the reason of several of their own rites explained. See the above mentioned 'Defence of Christianity, pp. 409, 410.

Upon the whole, though this writer represents it, p. 19, as a very ridiculous thing to suppose that what was more obscurely hinted in the law and the prophets is more clearly revealed in the gospel, and speaks in a gibing manner of 'those men of deep penetration and discernment' that can see this 'sort of connexion and harmony between the gospel and the law, and to whom it appears just and beautiful,' p. 19. I can see nothing in it but what is worthy of the wisdom of God, that he should at different times and in different circumstances of things, make gradual discoveries of his will; and that he should so order former revelations as to prepare the way for the latter, and the latter, so as to illustrate and confirm the former; and that what is more darkly and imperfectly hinted at in the one, should be more clearly and fully delivered in the other. Considered in this view and mutual reference, I must own that both the Old Testament and the New appear to me with a brighter glory, and derive mutual light and strength to one another. And the gradual opening and unfolding of the divine light in so many various views, has yielded great satisfaction in the contemplation of it to men that truly deserved the character of

persons of 'deep discernment and penetration,' with which this writer sneeringly honours them. As God's sending his own Son into the world for the redemption of mankind was the most important event that ever was; so to consider it as having been all along prefigured and foretold at sundry times and in divers manners, sometimes more clearly and openly signified by express predictions, sometimes more covertly by various types and figures, so many things pointing this way through so long a succession of ages, and all centering here; gives a noble and comprehensive view of this grand design, and shows one and the same important scheme still uniformly carrying on, one wise presiding Spirit and glorious divine Author, whose views extend through all ages. This is truly glorious and worthy of the supreme wisdom, and it is not an odd turn of expression, calling 'literal Christianity mystical Judaism,' and 'literal Judaism figurative Christianity,' and a jingle of the like phrases which the author makes use of to ridicule it, that will show the absurdity of such a scheme as this. And it is certain that what he ridicules is the very scheme advanced by our Saviour himself and his apostles, particularly the apostle Paul. He pretends indeed to apologize for them by alleging, that in this they only made use of the false way of arguing that had obtained amongst the Jews; that is, he would have it thought, first that they acknowledged and asserted the divine authority and inspiration of Moses and the prophets, though at the same time they believed them to be only false pretenders to inspiration; and then that they set up a sense of their writings which they themselves very well knew was not their sense, and endeavoured to put that false sense upon the Jews for the mind of the Holy Ghost. A conduct which is too inconsistent with common honesty and integrity, and with the known character of Christ and his apostles, to be admitted.

I shall only farther observe, to show the great consistency of this writer; that though in this part of his book he so confidently asserts and endeavours in many words to prove, that the prophetic and Mosaical writings were never understood to have any mystical sense till after the days of Ezra, when it had its first rise among the Jewish Cabalists; yet he elsewhere expressly declares that Moses and the prophets always wrote with a double intention, and had a double sense; the one literal and popular, the other to be understood only by the wiser sort. And he blames the Jewish nation for understanding the writings of Moses and the prophets according to the letter, without entering into the spirit and design of them, as he saith, 'St Paul hath evidently and irrefutably proved,' p. 249, 251. It is true, he very absurdly applies this to the historical narrations of facts which he would not have to be understood literally: But it is certain the apostle Paul, who he there pretends to believe hath evidently and irrefutably proved the mystical sense of the law and the prophets, and hath shown that the Jews did not enter into the true spirit and design of them, understood this not with regard to the historical facts and narra-

tions, but to the legal rites and ordinances, and shows they had a typical reference and a farther view. So that if he will be concluded by the judgment of that great apostle in this matter, as he pretends to be willing to be, there was such a sense originally intended in the legal priesthood and sacrifices. And what then must we think of this Author, who contradicts and denies what by his own confession 'St. Paul hath evidently and irrefutably proved?'

As to the proof he brings to show that the mystical and spiritual sense of the law and the prophets was never heard of before Ezra, because before that period 'no Jewish writer, priest, or prophet had ever mentioned a word of the resurrection, general judgment, and state of future rewards and punishments, as the proper sanctions of virtue and religion in this life, whereas all the Jewish writings afterwards are full of them,' p. 46. This is entirely misrepresented; as I shall show when I come to consider what he offers to prove, that all the Jews were 'Deistical Materialists and Sadducees,' and did not believe a future state, till after their return from the Babylonish captivity.

CHAPTER IV.

The author's objections against the law of Moses from the internal constitution of that law considered. His pretence that that law extended only to the outward practice and behaviour of men in Society, and that the obligation of it with respect to civil and social virtue extended no farther than to the members of that Society, and that they were put into a state of war with all the rest of the world. It is shown that that law required an inward purity of heart and affections. The great tenderness and humanity that appears in its precepts. It required a kind and benevolent conduct, not only towards those of their own Society, but towards strangers. That constitution not founded in the principles of persecution. It tolerated all that worshipped the one true God, though not conforming to their peculiar rites and usages. The punishing idolatry with death in the commonwealth of Israel accounted for. No obligation by that law to extirpate idolatry, and destroy idolaters in all other countries by fire and sword. His pretence that Moses directed the Israelites to extend their conquests through all nations, and that their constitution and plan of a government was contrived for it, examined. The contrary to this shown. The military laws, Deut. xx. explained. Whether that law absolutely prohibited all alliances with idolaters.

HAVING considered the author's objections against the law of Moses drawn from the authority of St. Paul, and from the pretended inconsistency between it and the gospel, I shall now proceed to consider those objections of his that are taken from the internal constitution of that Law, which he everywhere supposes to be altogether unworthy of God, and therefore impossible to be given by him. If his account be true, it was one of the worst, the most absurd, and tyrannical constitutions in the world;

‘a wretched scheme of superstition, blindness and slavery, bigotry and enthusiasm, that had nothing of truth or goodness in it, and was contrary to all reason and common sense.’ These and other hard epithets of the like kind he liberally bestows upon the law of Moses. Let us consider what he offers to support such severe invectives.

And first, one of his objections against even the moral law given by Moses to the people of Israel is, that as the law was constituted: ‘All its sanctions being merely temporal, relating only to men’s outward practice and behaviour in society, and none of its rewards or punishments relating to any future state; it could only relate to outward actions, and thereby secure civil virtue, and the civil rights and properties of the Society, against such fraud or violence, as might fall under a human cognizance; but could not relate to the inward principles and motives of action, whether good or bad, and therefore could not purify the conscience, regulate the affections, or correct and restrain the vicious desires, inclinations, and dispositions of the mind, and this is what St. Paul means, as often as he declares the weakness or insufficiency of this law, to enforce or secure a state of inward zeal, virtue, or righteousness, with respect to God and conscience,’ p. 27.

But it is capable of as clear a proof as any thing whatsoever, (and our author himself is sensible of it, as is evident from what he makes Theophanes his Christian Jew object against Philaethes his moral philosopher, on this head, p. 33, &c.), that the law of Moses did not relate to the outward actions alone, but to the inward principles and motives of action: and that ‘Moses not only always supposed,’ as he grants, ‘an inward right motive, or the principle and disposition of love to God and our neighbour, as necessary to constitute the true morality and religion of an action with respect to God and conscience:’ but that he directly and expressly, frequently, and in the strongest manner requires a right disposition of the heart and mind; and that this law was designed, contrary to what this author asserts, ‘to regulate the affections, and to correct and restrain the vicious desires, inclinations, and dispositions of the mind.’ This is the evident intention of the tenth commandment, which forbids not only outward evil actions, but the inward irregular affections and motions of concupiscence. This St. Paul takes notice of when he declares, that he should not have been sensible that such desires were sinful, or that they deserved death, if the law had not forbidden them, Rom. vii. 7, and again, ver. 14, he saith, ‘the law is spiritual,’ by which he evidently means that it extends to the inward dispositions of the soul and spirit as well as to the outward actions, and forbids and condemns all evil thoughts and inclinations. And the supposition of this vast extent and spirituality of the law lies at the foundation of his argument, that none can be justified by it; because none can be found that yield a perfect obedience to its pure and excellent precepts. This writer therefore plainly misrepresents St. Paul’s sense, when after having said that the law could only relate to

outward actions, and thereby secure civil virtue, but did not relate to the inward principles or motives of action whether good or bad, and therefore could not regulate the affections, restrain the vicious desires and inclinations of the mind, he adds, that is what 'St. Paul means as often as he declares the weakness or insufficiency of this law, to enforce or secure a state of inward real virtue or righteousness with respect to God and conscience.' p. 27. For the apostle by saying the law (if taken of the moral law) is weak, doth not mean as this writer insinuates, that its precepts relate only to the outward practice, and not to the inward dispositions of the heart and soul; for he expressly affirms that it is spiritual, and doth relate to the inward desires and affections: but he intends to show that the law was in itself unable to justify men, or entitle them to pardon and acceptance with God, and give them a right to eternal life (which is what he means by justification), because it could only justify those that obeyed its precepts, and no man doth perfectly obey it. So that it is weak, as he expresses it, through the flesh; that is, it is unable to justify men, because of the present weakness and corruption of human nature; whereby it comes to pass that in many instances they fall short of the pure and perfect obedience there required, and therefore their acceptance and justification must be wholly owing to the free grace and mercy of God, which is most clearly and gloriously dispensed and manifested through Jesus Christ in the gospel dispensation.

The passages this writer himself in the person of Theophanes refers to, clearly prove, that the law of Moses relates not merely to the outward actions, or external behaviour of persons in society, but to the inward dispositions of the heart, Deut. xii. 4, 5: "Hear, O Israel, the Lord thy God is one Lord; and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might." This excellent and comprehensive command, which takes in the sum of real vital religion and piety is often repeated in the law, see Deut. x. 12, xi. 13. The other passage he cites is from Lev. xix. 17, 18: 'Thou shalt not avenge or bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I am the Lord.' Where they are not only forbidden to avenge themselves, but even to entertain a secret grudge against their neighbours, and are commanded to love them as themselves. And this is enforced by this consideration, 'I am the Lord,' who search the hearts, and know your inward disposition, and will reward and punish you accordingly. And indeed, as God himself in that polity, and under that peculiar form of government, was regarded as in a special and immediate manner their king and judge, who perfectly knew their hearts and most secret dispositions, so they were taught by Moses still to have a regard to God in their obedience, and to expect rewards and punishments from him, not merely according to their outward actions, but the inward dispositions of their minds. And as to their outward actions, in this as well as other laws, they fell under

the jurisdiction of the magistrate. There were open punishments to be inflicted for public notorious offences, and evil practices against the good of the society.

Many instances might be produced besides those now referred to which plainly show, that the law of Moses reached not merely like the laws of other nations to men's outward actions and behaviour in society, but was designed to govern and regulate their inward affections and dispositions of soul. Thus Lev. xix. 17, in the words immediately preceding those last cited, it is said, 'Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart; thou shalt in anywise rebuke thy neighbour; and not suffer sin upon him.' A most remarkable passage, the like of which precept can scarce be found in any other law: it is there reckoned as hating our brother in our heart, if we have not such a regard for him as to put us upon tender affectionate admonitions, when we see him engaged in any wrong practice. In the precepts given the people concerning their distributing to the necessities of their poor and indigent neighbours, they are not only commanded to give, but to give from a charitable disposition, not to 'be grieved when they give,' Deut. xv. 10. They are commanded not only to observe God's statutes and judgments, 'but to keep them with all their heart, and with all their soul,' and that as they expect that God would bless and favour them, see Deut. xi. 13—18, xxvi. 16. The repentance required of them is expressed by 'turning to the Lord their God with all their heart, and with all their soul, Deut. xxx. 10, iv. 29, and they are required to circumcise the foreskin of their heart,' Deut. x. 16, which is explained, Deut. xxx. 6, by their loving 'God with all their heart,' and 'with all their soul, that they may live. Nothing can be plainer from all these passages, to which many more might easily be added, than that the law of Moses insists upon the necessity of real inward religion, and right affections and dispositions of heart. And to such an obedience as this it is that life and happiness is there promised. And we may therefore conclude, that under the life there promised, a promise of future happiness is couched and included, though not directly expressed. The author's argument in this case may be turned against him, he argues that because the law had only the sanctions of temporal prosperity and adversity; therefore it could only relate to outward actions, and not to the inward principles and motives of action, p. 27. On the contrary, it may reasonably be concluded, that because the law evidently reached unto, and was designed to regulate the inward principles and dispositions of the heart, and indispensably required inward vital religion and godliness, therefore the promises, at least, the general ones of the Lord's being their God, &c., were understood to extend farther than merely to outward temporal prosperity and adversity; and that under and together with the promise of temporal blessings, those of a spiritual and eternal nature were signified, though not directly expressed. And I shall afterwards show that good men, under that dispensation all along had a view to the future happiness, as the reward of

true religion and righteousness; and took the promises of temporal blessings not exclusively of, but as additional to, or as the types and pledges of the spiritual and eternal rewards of another world, which were all along believed among that people.

But this writer farther objects, that 'as this law could only reach the outward practice and behaviour of men in society, so it was very defective even in that, as providing no sufficient remedy against any such immoralities, excesses, and debaucheries, in which a man might not only make a fool or a beast of himself, without directly hurting his neighbour or injuring the society,' p. 27. What he means by these excesses and debaucheries I do not well know. Adultery and fornication are strongly and expressly forbidden in the law. And as to drunkenness and intemperance which he seems to have particularly in view, I think that passage, Deut. xxix. 19, 20, fairly and strongly implies a prohibition and condemnation of it. Where it is said concerning the man 'that blesseth himself in his heart, saying, I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of mine heart, to add drunkenness to thirst, and that the Lord will not spare him, but the anger of the Lord, and his jealousy shall smoke against that man, and all the curses that are written in this book shall lie upon him,' &c., so Deut. xxi. 20. When the parents are ordered to bring a rebellious son to be punished: drunkenness and gluttony are particularly mentioned, as the crimes whereof he is accused before the magistrates; they shall say unto the elders of his city, 'this our son is stubborn and rebellious, he will not obey our voice, he is a glutton and a drunkard:' this is here represented as one of the worst characters; and then it is added, ver. 21, 'And all the men of his city shall stone him with stones that he die.' When the priests are most strictly commanded to drink 'neither wine nor strong drink lest they should die,' when they went 'into the tabernacle, that they might put difference between holy and unholy, between clean and unclean; and 'that they might teach the children of Israel all the statutes which the Lord had commanded,' Lev. x. 9, 10, 11. Though the prohibition taken in its utmost rigour, as it extended to a total abstinence from all wine and strong drink, only obliged them whilst they were actually ministering in the sanctuary: yet the reason of the command sufficiently intimated the necessity of a constant sobriety and temperance in their whole conversation, that this was what God expected and required of all, and that drunkenness was what he highly condemned and disapproved. The same might be gathered from that particular constitution concerning the Nazarites, who being peculiarly devoted to God, were to 'separate themselves from wine and strong drink' during the time of their vow, Numb. vii. 3. Which was designed to let the people know how pleasing sobriety and temperance was to God, and that as they were all to be a 'peculiar people, holy unto the Lord,' so they should carefully avoid all intemperance and excess.

But what this writer seems to lay the principal stress upon is, 'that the obligation of the law with respect to civil or social vir-

true, extended no farther than to the members of that society : that is, to those who were of the natural seed of Abraham, or such as by proselytism were incorporated with them, and allowed to live amongst them ; but though they were obliged to live in peace and amity with one another, or within themselves, yet they were put into a state of war with all the rest of the world. They were not only left at liberty, but encouraged and directed by Moses himself to extend their conquests as far as they could, and to destroy by fire and sword, any or every nation or people that resisted them, and would not submit to become their subjects and tributaries upon demand.' And after mentioning their being commanded to extirpate the inhabitants of Canaan, he adds, that 'with regard to their farther conquest of other nations, for which they were designed, and for which their plan of government was contrived, their commission from Moses was, to offer them terms of peace, in which their lives were to be spared upon condition of their becoming subjects and tributaries to them ; and in case of refusal, they were to destroy all the males, and to take the women captives, and to seize upon all, their wealth, and proper goods, and cattle, as lawful plunder, Deut. xx. 10—18. And that thus it is evident, that the people of Israel, upon the very constitution and fundamental principles of Moses, were not to maintain any peace or amity with any other nation or people, but on condition of submitting unto them as their subjects, slaves, and tributaries, under such terms as they should think fit to impose,' pp. 28, 29, and again p. 42, he saith, that 'Moses commands all idolatry to be exterminated by fire and sword, not only in Canaan, but in all the rest of the world, so far as his people should have it in their power.' And p. 359, that 'the Jewish state, or the religion of Moses was founded in the principles of persecution, in which idolatry was to be exterminated, and idolaters to be destroyed by fire and sword ; and he there observes that the proselytes of the gate, that were not obliged to be circumcised, or to submit to the ceremonial law, yet were obliged absolutely to separate themselves from all idolaters, or people of other religions ; which separation was to regard all family intercourse of eating and drinking together, and even alliance in war, or any other conjunction of interest, though it should appear ever so necessary for mutual defence, and self-preservation.' He adds, 'that this strict and rigid separation from all the rest of the world, and abjuring their friendship or alliance as idolaters, is so closely interwoven with all the laws of Moses, that it may be called the fundamental constitution of that state or body politic. This Jewish lawgiver thought that it would be impossible to keep idolatry and false religion out of the society, but by punishing it with death ; and that true religion might be promoted and secured by force,' p. 360, and again, p. 373. That 'this was the nature and genius of the Jewish religion, in which the knowledge and worship of the only true God was to be promoted and secured by force and persecution, and by rooting out idolatry, and destroying idolaters by fire and sword.'

I have put these several passages together that we may collect the author's sentiments on this head, in one view, and in their full force.

As to the first thing he observes, 'that the obligations of the law with respect to civil or social virtue, extended no farther than to the members of that society, and that though they were obliged to live in amity with one another, yet they were put into a state of war with all the rest of the world : ' this is a very unfair representation. It must be considered indeed, that the law of Moses, though of divine institution and authority, never was intended to be an *universal* law obligatory on all mankind, but was peculiarly designed for that one nation, to whom it was immediately directed and published ; and it was in the nature of a special covenant between God and them. It must be expected therefore that directly, and in the first place, it should prescribe how the members of that society should behave among themselves ; and if it prescribed a just, a friendly, and a benevolent conduct in society, this must be owned to be highly laudable. And in this respect the laws of Moses are admirable, and wonderfully fitted to engage those to whom it was given to all the offices of kindness, and brotherly affection towards one another. The obligation it lays upon them not to oppress the poor, nor to detain from the poor debtor his pledge, if it was any thing that was the necessary means of his subsistence, or maintaining his family : the commands given them to lay aside all enmity and revenge, and not bear a secret grudge against their neighbour, nor refuse assistance even unto their enemies, but to be ready to do them kind offices, Exod. xxii. 25—27 : xxiii. 4, 5 ; Deut. xxiv. 10, 13. The kindness and equity with which they were obliged to treat their servants, to whom they are often urged by this consideration, that they ' themselves had been servants and bondmen in the land of Egypt,' Exod. xxi. 26, 27 ; Deut. v. 15 ; xv. 12—15 ; xvi. 11, 12 ; xxiii. 15, 16 ; xxiv. 14, 15 ; the many precepts obliging them to pity and assist the poor and distressed, and to treat them, not with haughty contempt and disdain, but with all kindness and tenderness, and to give to them liberally and without grudging, Lev. xxv. 35 ; Deut. xv. 7—11. The injunctions laid upon them not to take advantage of any person's bodily weakness and infirmities for abusing them, not to lay a stumbling block before the blind, nor to curse the deaf, Lev. xix. 14 ; Deut. xxvii. 18. These and other precepts of the like nature show such an equity, such a spirit of tenderness and humanity in the law of Moses, as can scarce be paralleled in any laws that were given to any other nation.

Nor was this to be confined merely to those of their own nation or society. They are very frequently commanded to show kindness to strangers, and not only not to vex and oppress them, but to deal kindly and tenderly towards them. The Jews themselves observe that the precepts prescribing a just and kind conduct to strangers are inculcated one and twenty times in their law. They are commanded to ' love the strangers as themselves,' Lev. xix. 34. And to love them not merely as they were

incorporated into the same society with themselves, as this author represents it, but to love and do good to them considered as strangers, and under that denomination. This is urged upon them in a pathetic manner, both by arguments drawn from the example of the merciful God himself, 'who loveth the stranger;' and because they themselves had 'been strangers,' and 'knew the heart of strangers,' Deut. x. 17, 18, 19. The strangers are often joined with the poor, the widow, and the fatherless, yea, and with the Levites, as persons that should in a particular manner be pitied and assisted; and whom it was a very great wickedness to vex or oppress, Deut. xxiv. 19; Lev. xxv. 35; Numb. xxvi. 11. The gleanings of the fields were to be left for them as well as the other poor; Lev. xix. 10. xxiii. 22; Deut. xxiv. 20, 21. 22. And agreeable to these declarations of the law, to deal by oppression with the stranger,' and to 'oppress the stranger wrongfully,' is represented as a crime and wickedness of a very heinous nature, and those that are guilty of it are reckoned amongst the worst of sinners, Ezek. xxii. 7, 29; Mal. iii. 5. I add as a proof of the great humanity of Moses's laws, that one design for which the Sabbath was instituted is there represented to be, that their men servants and maid servants, and the stranger might 'rest and be refreshed,' Exod. xxiii. 12; Deut. v. 14, 16. Nor does it appear that their kindness was to be confined to strangers of any one party or religion. It is true, they were not to suffer strangers to dwell among them that openly professed idolatry, because this was (as I shall show) a subversion of their peculiar constitution. But in every other case they were to allow strangers of all nations to live among them, and were obliged by their law to treat them with great kindness and humanity. So that this constitution was not on so narrow a foundation as the author represents it. They were not to confine their kindness to those of their own nation or religion, but to extend it to all that worshipped the one true God, though they did not live by their laws, nor observe their customs: and were far from exacting a rigid uniformity of sentiments or practice.

This writer indeed, to make the Mosaical constitution seem narrower, thinks fit to represent it thus, that their kindness 'was to extend no further than to members of their own society,' that is, 'to those who were of the natural seed of Abraham, or such as by proselytism were incorporated with them.' But it is far from being true; that their kindness was to be confined to those who 'were incorporated with them,' and made members of that particular society. This writer himself elsewhere acknowledgeth, 'that under that constitution there was room left for all nations to be proselyted or naturalized, without being circumcised or submitting to the ceremonial law,' p. 359. Here indeed he shows his ignorance of the Jewish constitutions, or else wilfully misrepresents it, when he makes their being proselyted and their being naturalized to be the same thing; and in several other parts of his book he calls proselytism naturalization, as if they were synonymous terms. But though the proselytes of justice, who were circumcised and obliged

to observe the ceremonial law, might be properly said to be naturalized, and incorporated with them, and to become members of that society: the proselytes of the gate of whom he there speaks, could not be said to be so, nor were ever regarded by the Jews as incorporated with them, or members of their society. They still regarded them as Gentiles, and were wont to call them 'the pious among the Gentiles.' And yet all such persons of whatsoever nation were allowed to live amongst them, and the law of Moses obliged the Israelites to treat them with great humanity and benevolence, though they were not circumcised, and did not submit to the ceremonial law. Nor were they ever warranted by that law to enforce the observation of it by fire and sword, or to use any methods of violence in order to proselyte those of any other nation to their religion, or to persecute them if they refused to conform to their peculiar rites. There is not any one precept in the whole law to this purpose. It is therefore a very wrong account that he gives of the Jewish state or religion of Moses, when he represents 'it as founded in the principles of persecution,' and as absolutely inconsistent with toleration, indulgence, and liberty of conscience, or the rights of private judgment.

It is true, that under that constitution, if any among the Israelites openly served other gods, and endeavoured to seduce others to do so, they were to be put to death; and if a town or city fell off to the open practice of idolatry, the ringleaders were to be inquired after and punished with death; and if the town persisted in it after due inquiry and admonition, it was to be destroyed. But if we consider the peculiar nature of that constitution, this may easily be accounted for. One great design for which that polity was erected, was to establish the worship of the one true God in opposition to idolatry. This was not only the chief principle of their religion, but the principal maxim of their state. For they were properly a community or body of people formed into a sacred polity under God, not only as the great Governor of the world as he is to the rest of mankind, but as in a special sense their King and Governor, who had been pleased to enter into a peculiar relation to them to this purpose, whom they had by solemn covenant acknowledged and recognized as such, and to whom they had promised and vowed obedience. This was the fundamental of their polity, the original contract upon which their state was founded. Their possession of the land of Canaan, and all the advantages and privileges promised them, absolutely depended by covenant upon their persevering in the worship of the true God. So that idolatry or the worshipping of other gods, besides the common guilt inseparable from it, as it is a very criminal breach of the law of nature, was in that constitution an act of rebellion against their rightful acknowledged sovereign, and a dissolving the original fundamental contract that lay at the foundation of their whole constitution, and by which it subsisted. And in this view of things, those that were guilty of idolatry were to be regarded as in the worst sense traitors and enemies to their country, engaged

in a design to subvert their fundamental constitution, and that original covenant on which their preservation as a community, and their right to all their privileges, and to their country itself depended. And therefore in such a circumstance of things, and in a state so constituted, it was far from being cruel or unjust, or contrary to the liberties of mankind, or the rights of conscience, to punish idolaters with death; any more than it is in other countries and states to punish high treason with death, or a conspiracy to subvert the state. And to have tolerated idolatry in such a constitution, would have been as great an absurdity, as it would have been in any other state to tolerate the open avowed enemies of the state, and those who manifestly endeavour to subvert it.

Nor does it follow that therefore idolaters are now to be punished with death in Christian states and commonwealths, because that particular law and constitution enjoining it is now no longer in force. It is true this writer urges, that 'whereas it has been commonly said, that the Jewish religion and government was a theocracy, and that no consequence can be drawn from it, to any other mere human forms of government; this must be a great mistake. For it can scarcely be doubted, that if God was to form any scheme or model of government, it would be in all respects the fittest, wisest, and best that could be pitched upon, and worthy to be imitated under every other state and constitution. To deny this would be to deny God's righteousness and superior wisdom. And therefore he hopes the patrons of the old scheme of the Jewish law and religion, and they who would now found Christianity upon Judaism, will consider what they are about before they go much further,' p. 373.

It will be easily owned that a scheme and model of government of God's own appointment must be the fittest and wisest, and most worthy to be imitated in the *like* circumstances and state of things; and consequently it will be owned that in such a polity so circumstanced and constituted, and of such a peculiar nature as the Jewish was, the constitutions of that commonwealth which were of divine appointment would be worthy to be imitated. But it does not follow that what God himself, who is certainly the best judge, thought fittest and properest in one circumstance or state of things, ought to be followed and imitated in every other state and circumstance of things: or that the laws and constitutions he gave as peculiarly adapted to such a constitution should be imitated by others, where that constitution with the peculiar reasons on which it was founded no longer subsists. And this author himself must acknowledge this, since he expressly saith, p. 207. That 'what God would require at one time under such particular relations and circumstances, he would not require at another time under other relations, and quite different or contrary circumstances.'

But though idolatry for the reasons now mentioned was punished with death in the land of Israel, yet it is far from being true, though this author repeats it over and over with great confidence, that they were obliged by the law to 'extirpate idolatry, and de-

stroy idolaters in all nations with fire and sword.' No such thing appears in the law of Moses. The commands there given to destroy idolaters manifestly relate to those among themselves, and in their own land that should worship other gods: as is evident from Deut. chap. xiii. And when they are commanded to destroy all the monuments of idolatry, that also plainly relates to the land of Canaan, as appears from all the passages where this is required, Exod. xxiii. 23, 24; xxxiv. 11, 13; Numb. xxxiii. 52; Deut. vii. 5—25; xii. 1, 21. See also Judg. ii. 2, and there is not one precept in the whole law directing and encouraging them to extirpate idolatry, and to destroy idolaters in other countries by fire and sword. Nor do we read of any war ever undertaken by any of the kings of Judah or Israel beyond the bounds of Palestine, merely to extirpate idolatry and to destroy idolaters. David was the most victorious prince they ever had, and was exceedingly zealous against idolatry, and yet it doth not appear that any one of his wars was undertaken merely for the sake of exterminating idolatry; nor is it ever taken notice of that he destroyed the monuments of idolatry in those countries which he subdued, but only that they became tributary to him, and brought him gifts.

It is hard to conceive upon what grounds this writer could assert as he does, that Moses was very confident that his people should have it in their power to extend their conquering arms, not only in Canaan but all the rest of the world. He often indeed expresses his confidence that they should conquer Canaan and destroy the nations there whom God had devoted to destruction; but he never once intimates any confidence that he had concerning their obtaining an universal empire. There is not the least hint in all the Mosaic writings that ever he believed or expected any such thing, but a great deal to the contrary. He most clearly and expressly foretels their many calamities and dispensations; that they should be scattered through all nations, not as lords and conquerors, but as captives, and under the power of their enemies, see Lev. xxvi. and Deut. xxviii., and his admirable song, Deut. xxxii. This author himself tells us, 'that nothing has since happened to the Jews, but what Moses had foretold. He knew from what he had seen and experienced of them, that after his death they would forsake God, forfeit all the favour and protection of his providence, and be finally destroyed and dissolved as a people. And he left it upon record against them, and caused his last dying words to be written and prescribed in the book of the law, pp. 327, 328.' Though the account he gives of what Moses had experienced of them will by no means account for the clear and admirable predictions he utters concerning the fate of that people in succeeding ages, and the surprising revolutions that befel them; yet it appears from the author's own confession, that Moses did not believe and expect that they would extend their conquests through all nations, and subdue them by fire and sword, of which yet this same writer tells us 'Moses was very confident.' Nor is it true that he encouraged and directed them to extend their conquests, or that 'their

constitution and plan of government was designed and contrived' for it. So far from this, that rather the whole frame of their government was so contrived as to discourage and hinder them from an ambition of enlarging their empire. Moses could not more effectually hinder it, than by binding them to the observance of such laws and constitutions, as rendered it in a great measure extremely difficult, if not impracticable, to make and maintain large conquests abroad. The utmost extent of dominion that is ever mentioned as what should any way, or at any time belong unto them, and which they actually possessed in the reign of David and Solomon, was but of a small extent compared with the rest of the world, even as known in Moses's time, viz. from the river of Egypt to Euphrates, Gen. xv. 18, but the land that was particularly given them for a possession was very small, and Moses describes it with great exactness, and the bounds of it, Numb. xxxiv. 1—13. Their being divided into several tribes, each of which were kept distinct, and had their several lots particularly assigned them in the land of Canaan; and their being forbidden ever to alienate their inheritances there; their having their cities of refuge assigned to them only within the limits of that land; their being obliged to offer all their sacrifices in that land, and at the tabernacle or temple there; their sabbatical years and jubilees, and many other constitutions of a peculiar nature, and which were confined in the original appointment to the land of Canaan; all these things sufficiently show that they were originally designed quietly to enjoy their own land, governed by their own laws, without ambitiously attempting to extend their conquests and disturb their neighbours. Nor can it be supposed that Moses, who was a very wise man, much less that God himself would have ever given them such laws and constitutions as these, if he had had it in view to encourage the people to go to conquer all nations, and extend their empire and religion throughout the world. Must they attempt an universal or extensive dominion, all whose most solemn acts of religion and worship were by the fundamental law of their polity to be confined to one small country? and to one particular place there? Must they attempt to disturb and annoy their neighbours merely from an ambitious desire of empire, when all their males were expressly and solemnly obliged by their law to appear three times a year before God at the sanctuary, and to leave their towns and houses unguarded, except with women and children? The same remark may be made upon that constitution whereby their kings are forbidden to *multiply horses* to themselves. Can it be supposed, that Moses would have commanded this if he had designed his people for extending their conquests through a great part of the world, which could scarcely be expected or attempted without cruelty? This is a plain proof that he designed to prevent or mortify a restless ambition and desire of conquest, by in a great measure rendering them incapable of it in an ordinary way. Though if they were invaded he exhorts them not to fear the horses and chariots of their enemies, but to trust in God; to show, that they were de-

signed chiefly for defending themselves in the land which God had given them, and not for arbitrarily offending and invading others from no other motive or view but that of conquest. When Moses promises national blessings and prosperity to them upon their obedience, Levit. xxvi. Deut. xxviii. he doth not mention God's raising them to universal empire, but that God would give them plenty, and peace, and prosperity, that they might dwell safely and comfortably in their own land; and that they should be more happy and honourable than other nations; and that he would give them victory over their enemies that 'should rise up against them,' i. e. that should attempt to disturb and invade them: for that this is the meaning of that phrase in the sacred writings is evident from many passages. See particularly, Deut. xix. 11; 2 Kings xvi. 7; Ps. iii. 1; xvii. 7; xviii. 48; lix. 1—4; xcii. 11.

These observations will help us to form a right judgment of the military laws in the twentieth chapter of Deuteronomy which the author refers to. If we compare this with other passages of the law, and with the whole of their constitution, we shall be convinced that the design of this chapter is not to direct and encourage them to 'extend their conquests as far as they could, and to destroy any or every nation that would not submit to become their subjects and tributaries upon demand.' As if they might invade whomsoever they would without provocation, or any other reason than the desire of making conquests. This is never once mentioned in the whole law as a sufficient reason for going to war. They are not encouraged or commanded to invade any except the devoted nations, which was a peculiar case, and in which they were only the executioners of the just sentence denounced against them by God himself for their execrable wickedness. But there were several even of the neighbouring nations whom they were expressly forbidden to meddle with; as the Edomites, the Ammonites, the Moabites; and were told that God had given those nations the several countries they possessed for an inheritance, from which they were not to endeavour to dispossess them. The Ammonites and Moabites were amongst the nations with whom they were not to cultivate any particular friendship or amity, or to seek their prosperity, because of their injurious and wicked treatment of them when they came out of Egypt, Deut. xxiii. 3, 4, 6; yet they were expressly prohibited to invade their country, or to distress them, Deut. xi. 5, 9, 15. This sufficiently showed that they were not causelessly, and of their own mere motion to invade other nations, even though they were idolaters, from a mere desire of conquest, and enlarging their dominion: the rules, therefore, given them for their wars in the twentieth chapter of Deuteronomy, do not relate to wars undertaken only from a motive of ambition and conquest, but to wars that were just and necessary. And with respect to the management of such wars they are directed and encouraged in the first place, not to be afraid of their enemies in the field, let them appear to be never so numerous and formidable, and better ap-

pointed for war than themselves; for that 'God would be with them.' And then if they conquered their enemies in battle, they are instructed how to deal with their cities which they should come to besiege, ver. 10, &c. Let the provocation given them be never so great, and the cause of the war never so just, and though they had it in their power to destroy their enemies, yet they were obliged, when they came before any of their cities first 'to proclaim peace' unto them, that is, to offer to let them live quietly in the enjoyment of their country, and of their goods and possessions, on condition of their becoming subjects and tributaries to them. Thus we are told concerning the Moabites and Syrians, that they 'became David's servants, and brought him gifts,' 2 Sam. viii. 26; and with regard to Solomon, that 'he reigned over all the kingdoms from the river, that is, Euphrates, unto the land of the Philistines, and to the border of Egypt' (which was the utmost extent of dominion that ever was promised any way to belong to Abraham's seed), 'they brought presents, and served Solomon all the days of his life,' 1 Kings iv. 21; and it is probable that except the tribute they paid they still continued to be governed by their own laws and customs. Now it would be hard to show the injustice of imposing a tribute on a conquered enemy, whom they had beaten in the field in a just war, and whose cities surrendered to them as conquerors. For it is plain that this is the case here supposed.

The next direction given them, relates to a city that when summoned by their victorious arms refused to surrender to them, and was taken by assault. For this is the plain meaning of it when it is said, 'if it (the city) will make no peace with thee, but will make war against thee, then thou shalt besiege it; and when the Lord thy God hath delivered it into thine hands, thou shalt smite,' &c., ver. 12, 13. Though they had refused the summons, yet if they surrendered before they were taken by assault, and consented to the conditions proposed to them, they were to be spared; for though only one summons or offer of peace is mentioned, yet no time is limited, but it is plainly intimated that if they should 'make an answer of peace,' and open, or surrender unto them, at any time before their city was taken by force, their lives were to be spared. But if they obstinately rejected all offers of peace, and after being made to know what they were to expect in case of being taken by force, still refused to surrender, in that case when 'God delivered the city into their hands,' that is, when they took it by assault (for this is the meaning of that phrase when applied to besieged cities, see Josh. x. 30, 32), they were allowed to kill all the males, *i.e.* all that bore arms; as hath been usual in the taking of towns by storm.* And yet even then they were not in the fury of

* In those days all the men were wont to fight and bear arms in a time of war, especially in a city that was besieged and assaulted. As we may see in the case of Ai, Jos. viii. 14—16, and may be plainly gathered from many other instances. There were not properly regular forces in garrison then as now, but all the citizens were soldiers. And on this foundation it is that when a city was taken by assault, the males and they only were suffered to be put to the sword: that is, the victors by this law had a liberty

an assault to kill 'women and children,' see ver. 14; instances of which there have been in many nations, and even among the Romans themselves, and that under generals famed for their humanity, as Scipio Germanicus, Titus, &c.; see Grot. de Jure Belli et Pacis, lib. iii. cap. 4, sect. 9. We find that in the language of Scripture the ruin of a city taken by assault is sometimes expressed by 'dashing their children against the stones,' because it was but too usual to do this on such occasions, Isa. xiii. 16, 18, Ezek. ix. 5; but the Israelites are here absolutely forbidden to imitate this barbarity. They were even in the heat of an assault to spare the 'women' and 'little ones;' and the word we there render 'little ones,' signifies any male or female under *twenty* years of age*; the principal design, therefore, of this law seems to be to limit their rage, and to show the utmost to which they were ever to proceed in cases of this kind, when they took towns by assault or by storm: they were only to kill the *males*, that is, those that bore arms, but were not to wreck their fury upon the young ones, or the weaker sex. And with respect to the *males*, or men in arms, if they had taken any of them captives, and had spared their lives, this would not properly have been a breach of this law, which was not designed absolutely to bind them in all such cases to kill all the males; but not to kill any other but the men, and so the Jews understood it; who never looked upon it to be unlawful for them in ordinary cases to take men captives in war, and to spare their lives. And this is plainly supposed in the answer which Elisha the prophet, who very well understood the law, makes to the king of Israel, when he asked whether he should smite the Syrian soldiers whom he had taken in Samaria: 'Thou shalt not smite them: wouldst thou smite those whom thou hast taken captive with thy sword and with thy bow?' 2 Kings vi. 22.†

I would observe by the way, that with respect to the women that were taken captives, the Israelites were not allowed by the

given them to slay the men, or in other words, those that fought against them and resisted them. Though this did not put it out of their power to show mercy to such of them as they should see fit to spare. Josephus gives the sense of the law of Moses with regard to the management of the war thus, that when they overcame in fight *κατ' ἅπαντες τῇ μάχῃ* they were to kill those that resisted *τοὺς ἀντραξάμενους*, the word properly relates to those that opposed them in fight, or were in arms against them, and were to keep the rest alive for tribute. And this seems to have been the real intention of this law, that they were to put those only to the sword that resisted them, and this even in towns taken by storm or assault, when there is usually a greater liberty for slaughter than in other cases, and against an enemy that had unjustly made war upon them. And if we may credit the most eminent Jewish writers they thought themselves obliged, when they besieged or assaulted a town not to begirt it closely on all sides, but to leave one side open, that such of their enemies as had a mind might flee away and save their lives. And this custom they will have to be derived from Moses. So Maimonides represents it. And that this was a very ancient tradition among them appears from the Targum of Ben Uzziel, in Numb. xxxi. 7. See Selden de Jure Nat. et Gentium, lib. vi. cap. 15; and Grot. de Jure Belli, &c., lib. iii. cap. 11, l. 14.

* See Schindler in voce, 570.

† Of which words Ben Gerson gives this sense. If thou wouldst slay persons because thou hadst thyself taken them captives in war, it would be a very unworthy action, and it would be much more to slay those whom the blessed God himself hath made thy captives. And Jarchi explains it to the same purpose

law to violate them. If any of them saw and liked a beautiful captive, he was first to take her to his house, and allow her a month to bewail her father and mother, which showed a great deal of tenderness and humanity towards the captive, and at the same time gave space for the heat of his passion to abate; and if his affection to her still continued, he was to *marry* her, and take her for his wife, or if he did not continue to love her, was to give her her liberty, see Deut. xxi. 10—15. This wise constitution was designed to lay a restraint on their exorbitant lusts, to which soldiers are very prone to give a full loose, especially in a town taken by assault.

And lastly, the orders given in that 20th chapter of Deuteronomy, ver. 19, not to 'destroy the fruit trees' in a siege, because they were 'man's life,' or useful for sustaining life; and which the Hebrew doctors justly interpret, as extending to all things of the like nature; that is, not to commit needless cruel wastes and devastations in the enemy's land, shows that Moses was far from encouraging such a fierce and savage spirit in the management of their wars as this writer would have us believe.

I would only farther observe, that whereas Moses, after giving these directions as to the management of the war, saith, 'Thus shalt thou do unto all the cities which are very far off from thee:' this is not to be understood, as this writer would have it, as if it was designed to encourage them to carry their conquering arms through all the world to the most distant nations. What is meant by the cities 'very far off' from them, Moses himself explains in the following words: for he immediately adds, 'Which are not of the cities of these nations.' The latter phrase is evidently designed to be explicatory of the former; and to show whom they were to understand by the cities that were very far off from them, even all that did not properly belong to the devoted nations of the land of Canaan. And it is certain that in Scripture language the words 'far off' do not always denote a great distance, but are sometimes applied to places that were not truly remote. Thus we are told concerning the waters of Jordan when the Israelites passed over, that they 'rose up on an heap very far from the city Adam that is beside Zaretan,' Josh. iii. 16, though this was not many miles off in the plains of Jordan; compare 1 Kings vii. 46. The inhabitants of Laish are said to be 'far from the Zidonians,' Judg. xviii. 7, 88, though they were but a day's journey from them, according to Josephus. And any stranger that is not of Israel is represented as 'of a far country,' and 'as coming from a far country,' Deut. xxix. 22, 1 Kings viii. 41, 2 Chron. vi. 32. So that the meaning is plainly this, that they were to conform to the directions he had given them, in all their wars with any other nations but the Canaanites, whom God had devoted to utter destruction.

Having considered what the author objects against the law of Moses from its constitutions of war, and supposed intentions of

universal conquest, I shall not need to say much to that part of his reflections, where he urges it as a proof of the spirit of inhumanity and *persecution* in that law, that it obliged them absolutely to separate themselves from all idolaters, and to have no alliances with them. He tells us, 'that by the law even the proselytes of the gate, who were not obliged to be circumcised, yet were obliged absolutely to separate themselves from all idolaters, or people of other religions (so he very candidly interprets it, as if to be 'idolaters,' and to be 'people of other religions,' were terms of the same signification); and that this separation was to regard all family intercourse, of eating and drinking together, cohabitation, intermarriages, alliances in war, or any other conjunction of interest, though it should appear never so necessary for mutual defence and self-preservation; and that this strict and rigid separation from all the rest of the world, and abjuring their friendship and alliances as idolaters is so clearly interwoven with all the laws of Moses, that it may be called the fundamental constitution of that state or body politic,' p. 360.

It will be easily owned that the Jews were, by their constitution and peculiarities, designed to be kept a *separate* people, and from confounding themselves with other nations; and this was ordered for very wise and valuable ends, some of which have been hinted at already. But the 'proselytes of the gate' were not bound by those peculiar distinctive rites that kept the Jews separate from other nations; especially those that related to the distinction of meats, and to ceremonial impurities. And whereas he tells us that the 'proselytes of the gate' were obliged absolutely to separate from all idolaters, even with regard to 'alliances in war, or any other conjunction of interest, though it should appear never so necessary for mutual defence and self-preservation; this is not true even of the Jews themselves. They were not obliged by any precept of that law never to have 'any alliances in war, or any other conjunction of interest' with the heathen nations, though it should 'appear never so necessary for mutual defence and self-preservation.' The precepts of the law forbidding them to make any covenant or league relating to the nations of Canaan, or the inhabitants of the land, as is evident from all the passages where this is mentioned, see Exod. xxiii. 32, 33, Exod. xxxiv. 12, 15, Deut. vii. 1, 2, to which may be added, Judg. ii. 2. The learned Grotius hath, in a few words, set this matter in a clear light, de Jure Belli et Pacis, lib. ii. cap. 15, sect. 9, where he observes that the Jews are nowhere in the law forbidden to make treaties of commerce with the Pagans, or any other such covenants which tended to the mutual benefit of both parties. He instances in Solomon's league with Hiram, king of Tyre, for which he is so far from being blamed, that it is mentioned as an instance of the 'great wisdom' which the 'Lord had given him,' 1 Kings v. 12; and before that there had been a great friendship between Hiram and David, ver. 1, as also between king David, and Nahash, king of

the Ammonites; and he was willing also to have kept up the same friendly intercourse with his son, though no man was more zealous against idolatry than that prince, see 2 Sam. x. 2. So far is it from 'being true which this writer here alleges, that they were to 'abjure all friendship and alliances with idolaters,' and that they 'were not to maintain any peace or amity with any other nation or people, but on condition of submitting to them as their subjects, slaves, and tributaries,' as he affirms, p. 29; and Grotius there observes, that the Maccabees, who were very strict in observing the law of Moses, entered into a league with the Lacedemonians, and with the Romans, for mutual assistance and defence, and that with the consent of the priests and people, and even offered sacrifices for their prosperity, 1 Mac. viii. and xii. As to *marriages* with idolaters the case is different. This is a much nearer union than what arises from treaties of commerce, or leagues made for mutual defence. It depends more on a person's own choice and inclination, whereas the other may be necessary in certain conjunctures and circumstances for the public safety. The danger of being perverted to idolatry is much greater in this case than in the other, and of having the children and family bred up to idolatry and false worship, which every good man would be desirous to prevent.

And accordingly, even the Christian Institution, which is so kind and benevolent, and every where breathes universal charity and good will towards mankind, yet forbids our entering into a conjugal relation with idolaters and unbelievers; see 2 Cor. vi. 14—16. So that this part of the Mosaic constitution is far from proving what our author produces it for, that it was founded on the principles of persecution, and on a want of benevolence to mankind. It is not indeed to be wondered at that this writer finds fault with this, who commends the Gnosticks not only for marrying with idolaters, but for feasting with them in the idol temples, and joining with them in all the outward acts of their idolatrous worship, which he seems to think not only lawful but commendable, provided they still kept from a mental adoration of the idol, pp. 388, 389. It will be easily granted this never was allowed to the Jews, nor is it to those whom he is pleased to call Jewish Christians, that is, to those that are Christians upon the foot of the New Testament, or the religion taught by Christ and his apostles. And however such a conduct may be consistent with this man's moral philosophy, yet how it can be made to consist with common honesty I cannot see.

CHAPTER V.

The author's pretence that the law of Moses encouraged human sacrifices as the highest acts of religion and devotion when offered not to idols but to the true God. Such sacrifices plainly forbidden in the law to be offered to God. His account of Lev. xxvii. 28, 29, considered. The argument he draws from the law for the redemption of the first-born turned against him. The case of Abraham's offering up his son Isaac considered at large. Not done in conformity to the customs of the Canaanites. The true state of the case laid down. Human sacrifices not encouraged by this instance, but the contrary. Abraham himself had full assurance that this command came from God. Upon what grounds his having had such a command from God is credible and probable to us. It could not be owing to the illusions of an evil spirit: nor to the force of his own enthusiasm. The author's pretence that this instance destroys the law of nature, and leaves all to mere arbitrary will and pleasure, examined.

THE Moral Philosopher has several other objections against the law of Moses scattered through his book. He would fain have it thought that that law encourages and approves 'human sacrifices.' The author of 'Christianity as old as the Creation,' had laboured this point before him, and what he offers on this head hath received a full answer.* But these gentlemen are never weary of repeating the same objections with as much confidence as if not the least notice had been ever taken of them before. This writer is pleased to tell us, that, 'among the free will offerings offered by the Jews under the law, human sacrifices were looked upon as the most efficacious and acceptable to the Lord. And though they were not exacted by law (though if the interpretation he pretends to give of Lev. 28, 29, be just, they were exacted by law), yet they were encouraged and indulged as the riches and donations, and as the testimony of the most perfect religion, and highest degree of love to God. Indeed, such burnt-offerings of their sons and daughters to idols and false gods were represented as the greatest possible abomination; and for the same reason such oblations were regarded as the highest possible acts of religion and devotion, when they were intended and given up as sacrifices of atonement to the true God,' pp. 129, 130.

But certainly, since there are such particular directions given in the law relating to sacrifices, appointing what things were to be offered to God, and in what manner; if human sacrifices, or the offering of their sons and daughters, were there designed to be encouraged as the most valuable oblations, and acts 'of the most perfect religion,' there would have been directions in the law concerning them. And there not being the least direction there given relating to any such sacrifices, when there are such minute and particular directions in every other kind of oblations, is a manifest

* See answer to Christianity as old as the Creation, vol. ii. p. 468, et seq.

proof that they were never designed to be encouraged and approved by that law, and indeed is equivalent to an express prohibition of them under that constitution. For they were strictly enjoined to keep close to the law in their sacred ceremonies, and not to add thereto or diminish from it, and particularly were not suffered to offer any other sacrifices, or in any other manner than was there expressly appointed. But besides this, there is as plain a prohibition of those human sacrifices as can be desired in the law itself, Deut. xii. 30, 31. In that chapter God forbids his people to worship him in the same manner and with the same rites with which the heathens worshipped their idols. In the beginning of that chapter, after having mentioned their worshipping their gods upon the 'high mountains' and 'hills,' and in 'the groves,' and with 'graven images,' he adds, ver. 4, 'Thou shalt not do so unto the Lord thy God;' that is, thou shalt not offer sacrifices to him in the high places and groves as they worshipped their idols; but as it follows, ver. 5, 6, 'Unto the place which the Lord thy God shall choose, shall ye come, and thither shall ye bring your burnt-offerings,' &c., and then, ver. 30, 31, he forbids their imitating the heathens in offering up human sacrifices to him as they did unto their gods. 'Take heed to thyself that thou be not snared by following them, after that they be destroyed before thee, and that thou inquire not after their gods, saying, how did these nations serve their gods? even so will I do likewise. Thou shalt not do so unto the Lord thy God: for every abomination to the Lord which he hateth, have they done unto their gods: for even their sons and daughters they have burnt in the fire unto their gods.' It is very evident here that God plainly forbids his people, not only to worship their gods, but to imitate them in the manner of their worship. And particularly he mentions their sacrificing of their sons and daughters to their gods, as a thing which was highly abominable in his sight; and that therefore the Israelites should not imitate this detestable practice in his worship. 'They should not do so unto the Lord their God.' And in the words immediately following in opposition to this, he charges them to 'observe to do whatsoever he commanded them;' and forbids them to 'add thereto or diminish from it.' Taking the whole passage together, I think it plainly appears from it, that by the law of Moses God was so far from encouraging the Israelites to offer up human sacrifices to him as the heathens did to their idols, or teaching them to regard it as the highest possible act of devotion when done to the true God, that he could not more strongly express his absolute detestation and abhorrence of it.

There is no necessity, therefore, of examining the author's account of that passage, Lev. xxvii. 28, 29, which cannot admit the interpretation he puts upon it. Indeed the account he gives of it, and of the vows intended in that chapter, is so confused and obscure, that I must confess I do not understand it, and it is of little importance to seek out his meaning. I shall only observe that whereas he speaks of two sorts of vows, 'general and special;' one

distinction between them he supposes to lie in this, that with regard to the former there was a right of redemption by the law ; but in the latter case, whatever portion or thing had been thus especially 'vowed, must be destroyed by fire, and taken off from the use of man as a burnt-offering unto the Lord.' And to this he applies the 28th and 29th verses, which he renders thus : ' Nevertheless nothing separate from the common use, that a man doth separate unto the Lord, of all that he hath, whether it be man or beast, or land of his inheritance, may be sold or redeemed ; for every thing separate from the common use is holy unto the Lord : ' that is, according to this author's account of it, it ' must be destroyed by fire, and taken off from the use of man as a burnt-offering unto the Lord.' So that if his interpretation be admitted, the field of a man's possession when thus devoted to the Lord, was to be destroyed by fire, and taken off from the use of man as a burnt-offering unto the Lord. And yet he that here makes the nature of these special vows to consist in this, that what was thus specially vowed to God was not to be redeemed, but of necessity must ' be destroyed by fire as a burnt-offering unto the Lord ; ' in a page or two after declares, that the thing devoted to God by this special vow became the ' absolute property of the priest, who might either sacrifice it, or sell it, as he thought fit ; and he thinks that if there were not ' as many burnt-offerings of the human kind as there might have been, it was because the priest had good reason for it, not to burn any thing in common cases that would yield money,' p. 141. Thus our Moral Philosopher, in his eager zeal to expose the priests' mercenariness, doth not reflect that he contradicts and exposes himself as a captious and inconsistent writer.

I shall not enter into a large explication of that passage, Lev. xxvii. 28, 29, which he has so miserably mangled. It is done fully and accurately by the most learned Mr. Selden, lib. 4, de Jure Nat. et Gent. cap. 6—11. I shall only observe briefly, that the former part of that chapter relates to things dedicated or consecrated to God by a ' simple vow,' whether men or beasts, or houses or lands, which might, after having been thus dedicated or consecrated, be redeemed with money. The 28th verse relates to things devoted to God by a *cherem* (for that is the word in the original, different from what was used concerning the other vows), that is, by a vow of a peculiar nature, accompanied with a curse (for this is the proper notation of the word); and whatever a man ' should thus devote unto the Lord of all that he had (that is, of persons or things that were his own property), whether of man or beast, or field of his possession, was to be perpetually employed for the uses to which it was devoted. The man that gave or vowed it could never redeem it. If it was land that was thus devoted, it was absolutely given to the use of the sanctuary ; if it was a man or a slave (for this is spoken concerning such men as were their absolute property, and included under that general expression, ' all that a man hath,' that is, his proper goods), he was to be perpetually employed in the service of the sanctuary, or for the use of

the priests, and never to be redeemed; such probably were the Nethinims, whom David and the princes are said to have 'appointed for the service of the Levites,' Ezra viii. 20. This, by the unanimous consent of all the Jewish writers is all that is intended in the 28th verse; but the 29th verse, which follows, doth not relate to things which a man should devote to sacred uses out of what he had, that is, of his own possession or property, of which alone the 28th verse is to be understood; but it relates to persons devoted to destruction by a solemn cherem or curse; as the Canaanites were, by God's own appointment, for their execrable wickedness. An instance of which we have in Jericho, Josh. vii. 17, 18, where this word cherem is several times made use of to signify their being accursed, or devoted to utter destruction. And such of the Israelites as fell into open idolatry, were also, by the appointment of the law itself, to be devoted to destruction. See Exod. xxii. 20: 'He that sacrificeth unto any God save unto the Lord, he shall be utterly destroyed; or he shall be devoted.' For the word there used in the original is precisely the same that is used in the passage we are considering, Lev. xxvii. 29, and is here rendered 'devoted.' The word cherem is also used, Deut. xiii. 15, to signify the destruction of a city that revolted to idolatry; it was to be destroyed as execrable and accursed. And accordingly the Septuagint render the original word which we translate 'destroying it utterly,' ἀναθέματι ἀναθεματίσετε, ye shall curse it with a curse. And none of these persons that were thus devoted to destruction for just causes by a solemn cherem or curse were to be redeemed: no ransom whatsoever was to be accepted for them, but they were sure to be put to death. This is the account the Jews themselves give of this passage, Lev. xxvii. 29, and which renders it perfectly consistent with other passages in the law; but certainly it cannot be understood to relate to human sacrifices, which, as I have shown, are nowhere required in the law, yea, are plainly forbidden there.

As to the instance of Jephthah which he here produces, whether he did indeed sacrifice his daughter unto the Lord, is a question debated amongst the most learned critics, both Jews and Christians, and still like to be so; though this writer, with his usual confidence, very magisterially determines it, without bringing any new light to the question, except by calling the opinion he does not like 'monstrous and ridiculous.' But let us suppose that Jephthah did indeed sacrifice his daughter, it only follows that he did wrong in it through a mistaken zeal and scrupulosity; since, as I have shown, the law of Moses nowhere allowed human sacrifices. None of the Jews, ancient or modern, that ever mention this action of Jephthah's, approve his doing it; and if it had been approved and thought fit to be imitated, how comes it that this is the only instance that can be produced, and that we have no account of any of their most zealous great men or heroes ever offering such human oblations, as undoubtedly they would have done, if such oblations had been regarded as the most exalted acts of devotion as this author would have us believe?

The argument he endeavours to bring from the law for redeeming the first-born may be turned against him, and proves the very contrary of what he produces it for. Since when God challenges every first born male of man and beast to himself, in memorial of his slaying the first-born of the Egyptians, and sparing the Israelites, which was a wise constitution, aptly contrived to keep up a constant memorial of this most extraordinary event, and consequently of their deliverance out of Egypt, the remembrance of which it was of high importance to preserve throughout all their generations ; I say, when he made this constitution, he commanded the first-born among clean beasts to be sacrificed ; but with regard to the first-born of unclean beasts, which were forbidden in the law to be sacrificed, and all the first-born among men, they were expressly commanded to redeem them. A manifest proof that as he would not have unclean beasts to be sacrificed, so neither would he have any human sacrifices to be offered to him. This is the plain original law relating to that matter, *Exod. xiii. 15, 18*. Yet this writer has the confidence to tell us, that this law concerning the redemption of the first-born, which he calls a 'severe law, whereby were enjoined such terrible things in righteousness,' laid them under an obligation to sacrifice their first-born children unto God. He is pleased, indeed, to allow that 'this law was afterwards very much mitigated or rather repealed,' viz. upon 'God's accepting all the males of Levi for the first-born males of all other tribes, as a ransom and redemption of their lives and souls.' And if we would know how far that severe law was mitigated or repealed, he informs us that it consisted in this, that 'God hereby remitted the legal obligation of human sacrifices, and left it to the free choice and voluntary oblation of his people, whether their burnt-offerings of this kind should be either male or female, and whether it should be the first-born or not,' see pp. 137, 138. So that he supposes, that before the Levites were taken instead of the first-born, the Israelites were under a legal obligation to offer up all their first-born male children as sacrifices or burnt-offerings unto the Lord ; and afterwards they had the honour done them to leave it to their choice, not whether they should offer up any of their children at all, but to offer either males or females, or any other of their children, whether of the first-born or not.

But certainly an author that is capable of writing at this rate can have little regard either to truth or decency, or to his own reputation ; since it is impossible he should not be sensible that all this is his own fiction, without the least foundation in the law itself to support it. The original law which he refers to, *Exod. xiii.*, is so far from laying the Israelites under a 'legal obligation' to offer their first-born as sacrifices to God, that to have done so would have been the most express and manifest breach of that law, which at the same time that it commands the firstlings of clean beasts to be sacrificed, expressly commands, again and again, not that the first-born of men should be sacrificed, but that they should be 'redeemed,' see *Exod. xiii. 13, 14* ; see also *Numb. xviii. 15, 16*. And

when God took the Levites instead of the first-born to himself, and declared that they should be his, as the first-born should have been his in whose stead they were taken ; this plainly shows that as the firstlings of clean beasts were by virtue of their consecration to the Lord to be sacrificed, because sacrifices of such things were what the Lord accepted ; so the first-born among men, by virtue of their being sanctified to the Lord, must have been not sacrificed, but appropriated to his more immediate use, and to the service of the sanctuary ; because God did not accept of human sacrifices. And accordingly it pleased him to take the Levites in their stead to serve him in the sanctuary, whom he gave to Aaron and the priests to minister unto them. This is the plain meaning of that transaction of which we have an account, Numb. iii. 7, 8, 9, 12, 13, 41, 45. His poor playing upon the word redeemed is too trifling and contemptible to be taken notice of in opposition to the evident meaning of the text.

The instance he produceth of Abraham's attempting to offer up his son Isaac is so far from proving that God is represented in the books of Moses as approving human sacrifices, that it rather proves the contrary ; since, though God for the trial of his faith and obedience saw fit to command him to offer up Isaac, yet he would not suffer him to execute it. His forbidding him by a voice from heaven to lay his hand upon his son, showed that though he would have his servants pay an entire submission to his authority and will in all things, and to be ready to renounce their dearest interests for his sake, yet to be worshipped with human sacrifices was what he did not approve, and would not in any case permit ; and therefore would not suffer it to take effect, not even in this single and extraordinary instance, though he could easily have raised Isaac from the dead, and have thus restored him to his indulgent father.

But this case deserves to be more distinctly considered, especially as our author here expresseth himself with such a peculiar air of confidence and triumph, as if it were a thing that could not possibly be defended. And many have taken pleasure in representing it as absolutely contrary to all justice and reason, and the law of nature, though the Scripture bestoweth high encomiums upon it as a noble instance of Abraham's faith and obedience.

Our Moral Philosopher would be thought to state the question relating to the case of Abraham with greater exactness than hath been hitherto done, and pretends that it hath been very much mistaken by those that have undertaken to defend it. He acknowledgeth that 'no doubt but every positive law, of what nature or kind soever, must be just and right, supposing it to be a command from God, how unreasonable or unfit soever it might appear to our weak, imperfect, and limited understandings. But then he saith, 'the question is, how God should command any such things, or what proof could be given of it if he did. A question which our systematical divines and positive law-men never cared to meddle with,

though this is the only thing they ought to speak to, if they would say any thing to the purpose,' p. 134.

It is not improper here to observe, that from his own concessions it plainly follows, that a thing's appearing unreasonable or unfit to our understandings is not a sufficient reason for our rejecting it, if we have otherwise a sufficient proof that this command came from God. For in that case we ought to charge the apparent unfitness of it on the weakness or darkness of our own understandings, and to believe that it would appear to us fit and reasonable, if we viewed it in the same light in which the divine understanding beholds it, and could take in the whole compass of things, and the relation they bear to the order and harmony of the whole. But then he saith the question is, 'how God should command such things, or what proof could be given of it if he did?' As to the question, 'how God should command such things, *i.e.* things that may appear unreasonable or unfit to our weak, imperfect, and limited understandings?' the answer is plain, he may command such things whenever it so happens, that though through the weakness of our understandings they appear unfit to us, yet in his own comprehensive wisdom he sees them to be fit and proper to be required of us in that circumstance of things, and may, therefore, see reasons for laying those commands upon us, which we do not at present see, but shall know afterwards. But he farther asks, if God gave such a command, what proof could be given of it? And he particularly asks, 'How came Abraham to know this?' I answer, that Abraham knew it by extraordinary revelation, which may be conveyed into the mind with such overpowering, irresistible light and evidence that a man can no more doubt of it than of any thing that he hears or sees. Concerning which see above, pp. 12—14, where it is also shown that this author himself acknowledgeth that such an immediate revelation may give an assurance and certainty to the mind equal to that arising from a mathematical demonstration. And particularly with regard to this case of Abraham, I cannot but think the reflection Maimonides makes a very just and sensible one: 'That we are taught by this history that the prophets were fully assured of the truth of those things which God spake to them, which they believed as strongly as things of sense. For if Abraham had in the least doubted, whether this was the will of God or no, he would never have consented to a thing which nature abhorred.' More Nevoch. p. 3, cap. 24.

It will farther confirm this, if it be considered, that this was not the first time of God's communicating his will to Abraham in a way of extraordinary revelation. He had done it several times before, and that in such a manner as gave him full assurance that it was God that spake to him.* In obedience to the will of God thus signified he had left his own country and kindred, and came into a land that he was an entire stranger to. And when it was

* See this well urged, 'Revelation examined with Candour,' vol. ii. dissert. 8.

declared to him in the same way of extraordinary revelation, that he should have a son by his wife Sarah, though he was an hundred years old, and she was ninety, and had been barren all her days : he firmly believed it, however incredible it might seem to be, because he knew and was persuaded that it was God himself that promised it. And this promise of God, though contrary to the course of nature, was exactly fulfilled. When, therefore, the command came to him about sacrificing his son, it found him perfectly well acquainted with the manner of God's appearing to him, and communicating his will. And however strange and unaccountable that command might appear, yet he knew, by undoubted evidences, that it was the same God that spake to him, and gave him this command, that had spoken to him on so many occasions before, and had entered into covenant with him, and given him so many tokens of his favour. And as his soul was steadily possessed with the most adoring thoughts of God's supreme authority and dominion, and the most unshaken persuasion of his power, wisdom, righteousness, and goodness, so he did not doubt but he had wise and glorious ends in view in this particular extraordinary method of procedure, though he could not at present distinctly discern them ; and therefore exercised an implicit dependence on the supreme wisdom and goodness, and an entire resignation to the divine will. He knew what promises God had made to him with regard to Isaac, and was firmly persuaded that he would order matters so that they should all be fully accomplished ; and that as he had received him from God in an extraordinary manner, and now was going to give him up to him in obedience to his command, so he should receive him from him again to greater advantage ; ' accounting that God was able to raise him from the dead ; ' as the apostle expresseth it, Heb. xi. 19. Considered in this view there is nothing in Abraham's conduct that is absurd or contrary to reason, nothing but what is suitable to his own amiable character, and which manifested the most excellent dispositions. And if God saw fit to take this extraordinary method to produce those glorious dispositions into a full and open light to the view and admiration of angels and men, by exercising him with one of the greatest trials that human nature can undergo (for what could be a greater trial than to command him to offer up his son Isaac, who was the heir of the promises, which seemed not only to be a losing his most beloved son, but a subverting all his own hopes and the promises made to him ?) I can see nothing in this that can be proved to be unworthy of the divine wisdom and goodness. The temporary pangs and uneasiness this gave Abraham were abundantly compensated by the unalterable transports of joy that must needs have overflowed his soul when he found his beloved child at once restored to him as it were from the dead, his obedience so highly approved by God himself, and the promises renewed to him in a more ample and glorious manner than before. This triumph of his faith in such an unparalleled trial, must have produced a satisfaction of

mind that lasted through his whole life, and hath rendered him illustrious to all generations.

But our author puts another question, and that is, 'What proof could Abraham give that he had any such command or revelation from God? Will any of our present clergy undertake to prove that such a command from God to Abraham can be now credible or probable to us? It may be probable enough that either Abraham had such a belief or conceit, or that Moses mistook the case. But that God in this or any other case should 'dissolve the law of nature,' and make it a man's duty, as a thing morally reasonable and fit, to act contrary to all the natural principles and passions of the human constitution, is absolutely incredible, and cannot possibly be proved,' p. 133.

I shall first show what reasonable proof we have that Abraham had such a command or revelation from God, and then answer the author's objections against it.

He grants that it is probable enough, that 'either Abraham had such a belief or conceit, or that Moses mistook the case.' With regard to Moses, not to insist at present on his extraordinary inspiration, of which there is sufficient proof, he appears to have been perfectly well apprised of the principal circumstances of the life of Abraham, their great and renowned ancestor; for whom they had the profoundest veneration, and the covenant made with whom was the grand foundation of their hopes. He carefully records the principal events that befel him, and especially this, which was the most remarkable of them all. Moses himself was far from encouraging human oblations, which, as I have shown, are plainly forbidden in his law. And it was a thing in itself so strange and improbable, that such a man as Abraham, of great power and riches, renowned for his wisdom and probity as well as piety towards God, who had only one son by his beloved wife Sarah, the child of his old age, on whom he had fixed all his hopes, should attempt to slay him with his own hands, and offer him up for a burnt-offering, that no reason can be given why Moses should have recorded it, if he had not been fully assured of the truth of the fact. No doubt, Abraham himself gave an account of the whole transaction, and how the execution of it was prevented, and so did Isaac too, who was a competent witness of it, being of sufficient age when it happened, and who was himself to have been the victim. And we may justly conclude, that there was no particular of Abraham's whole life which was more universally known, and the memory of which was more carefully preserved than this, since it must necessarily have made a greater noise than any of the rest, and was the most extraordinary of them all.

But the chief question is still behind: supposing that Abraham had a belief or conceit (to use this author's expressions) that he had received such a command from God, 'how can it be made credible or probable to us,' that he really received it from God? I answer, that either he received this command from God, or it

was owing to the illusions of an evil spirit, or to the heat of his own enthusiastic imagination. That it was not owing to the illusions of an 'evil spirit,' is manifest among other reasons from the conclusion of it. Can it be supposed, that if an evil spirit had carried him on so far, he would have hindered him when he was on the point of accomplishing it? For it was evidently the same power that bid him do it, and afterwards hindered his executing his purpose. Besides, it cannot be supposed, that a wise and good God who had honoured Abraham with such extraordinary manifestations of his favour and revelations of his will, would suffer an evil being so to personate him, to give commands to his faithful servant in his name, in a manner so proper to the Deity, that Abraham, who had been used to divine communications, could not possibly distinguish this message of Satan from the immediate command of God himself and was thereby under a necessity of being deceived in a matter of such vast importance: and indeed, if it was an evil spirit that gave this command, and then so solemnly renewed the promise and covenant made with Abraham, it must be said it was an evil spirit that had all along appeared to him with such a divine majesty, and that took upon him the character of God Almighty and All-sufficient, and made him such promises with regard to him and to his seed. And if so, then it was an evil spirit that appeared to Moses, and wrought all the stupendous miracles that were done at the establishment of the law; and that inspired the prophets under the Old Testament, and afterwards sent Jesus Christ into the world, and raised him from the dead, and confirmed the gospel with such a series of illustrious attestations. For he that did all this is the same that all along characterized himself with the title of the God of Abraham; and there is a constant reference to the promises and covenant made with Abraham, both in the Old Testament and in the New.

But besides that, it would be to the highest degree absurd, to imagine that an evil spirit should carry on an uniform design to promote the cause of piety, righteousness, and virtue among men, and to destroy his own kingdom and interests; besides this, I say, to suppose an evil being to have such influence, and to exert such amazing acts of power and majesty for so long a succession of ages, without ever being controlled or overruled, is absolutely inconsistent with the belief of a wise and good presiding Providence. It confounds all our notions of the Deity, and introduces two supreme independent principles, or rather it leaves no good principle at all, but makes the God that governs the world, and presides over the affairs of men, to be an evil being.

But if our author will not venture to say that it was an evil spirit that appeared unto Abraham, and gave him this command, it will be said, that his believing he had a command from God, was wholly owing to the deception of his own imagination, and the force of his enthusiasm. But neither can this be supported if the circumstances of the case be considered. Abraham believed that God had given him Isaac in an extraordinary manner, that by

him he was to have the posterity that was to inherit the land of Canaan; by him he was to have that seed in whom all the families of the earth were to be blessed; in a word, he looked upon this child as the heir of all the promises, and of the covenant. These being his sentiments, and which were confirmed in him by repeated revelations from time to time, it could never have entered into his mind, merely by the force of his own imagination, that God who had promised all this, would require of him to put Isaac to death, in whom alone all these promises were to receive their accomplishment. However strong we suppose the force of his enthusiasm to be, it would never have carried him to imagine a thing contrary to all his hopes and expectations, and to all the former revelations which he believed he had received from God. It would have produced visions more agreeable to his darling hopes which he had so long conceived, and which were so deeply fixed in his soul. But if we should suppose that he had conceived so strange and wild a fancy in his circumstances, as to cause him to believe so strongly, that God had given him such a command, how comes it that the same heated imagination did not carry him to execute it? Can it be imagined that the same pang of enthusiasm that wrought in him so strong and peremptory an assurance, that it was the command of heaven that he should sacrifice his son, and that carried him to the very point of executing it, should in the same instant make him believe that he heard a voice from heaven forbidding him? This is absolutely inconceivable. His stopping in such circumstances, and when he was so absolutely possessed with the belief of a divine command, could never be owing to the workings merely of his own fancy; and showed that neither the beginning nor the ending of it was owing to the mere heat of his own imagination.

Again, if all this from first to last was an illusion of Abraham's own imagination, and entirely owing to the force of his enthusiasm, then it must have been supposed that his other visions, and the appearances of God to him, and the promises made to him were also nothing else but workings of his own fancy. And no doubt this author would have it understood so. But we have good evidence to the contrary. Could he by the mere force of enthusiasm foretel that his posterity should be in a state of servitude and affliction in a foreign land, and at the end of four hundred years be brought out in a wonderful manner with great substance, and return again to the land of Canaan, and have it given them for an inheritance? see Gen. xv. 13—16. Could his enthusiasm enable him certainly to know that his wife Sarah, who had been barren all her days, and was then ninety years old, should bear him a child when he was an hundred? Or if he had been so wild as to have conceived an expectation of a thing so absolutely beyond the course of nature, could he by the mere force of enthusiasm have effected it?

Add to this, that Abraham was a wise and excellent person, one of the most honoured and distinguished characters in all antiquity;

eminent for his piety, prudence, and probity, and therefore greatly respected when alive, and his memory afterwards had in the highest esteem and veneration throughout all the east : whereas according to this representation he must have been a perfect madman, one of the wildest and most frantic enthusiasts that ever lived. His faith so much celebrated in Scripture was all frenzy, and he believed not in God, but in the illusions of his own heated imagination. How is this consistent with the account given of him both in the Old Testament and the New ? The law, the prophets, our Saviour Jesus Christ, and his apostles, all concur in giving testimony to Abraham as an illustrious prophet, who had immediate communication with the Deity, and to whom God was pleased in an extraordinary manner to reveal and make known his will. The reality of God's appearances to Abraham, oft he covenant made with him, and the promises given him is every where supposed, and continually referred to. It lies at the foundation of all succeeding revelations. He is honoured both in the Old Testament and in the New, with the glorious title of the 'friend of God,' Isa. xli. 8 ; James ii. 23. Our Saviour, whenever he mentions him, does it in such a manner as shows the high esteem he had for him ; and he positively declares, that 'Abraham saw his day and was glad,' which evidently relates to the promise made to him, that in his 'seed should all the nations of the earth be blessed ;' which was particularly renewed to him on the occasion we have been now considering. The apostle Paul, for whom this writer professes a great respect, frequently takes notice of the promises given by God to Abraham, and the covenant made with him, as things of undoubted certainty ; he often makes mention of him with the most glorious encomiums, as the most eminent example of a noble and steady faith in God to all generations, the 'father of all the faithful ;' and represents all true Christians as his 'seed, and blessed together with him.' And lastly, with respect to this particular instance of his offering to sacrifice his son, this, instead of being represented as a mad fit of enthusiasm, only owing to the frenzy of an over-heated imagination, is mentioned by two inspired writers, St. Paul and St. James, as the most illustrious proof of the greatness of his faith and obedience. The testimony of the apostle Paul to this purpose is very remarkable, Heb. xi. 17, 18, 19 : 'By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac : and he that had received the promises, offered up his only begotten son : of whom it was said, that in Isaac shall thy seed be called : accounting that God was able to raise him up even from the dead ; from whence also he received him in a figure.' To which may be added that of St. James, which is no less full and express, James ii. 21, 22, 23 : 'Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar ? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect ? And the Scripture was fulfilled, which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness, and he was called the friend of God.'

By this time this writer may see upon what grounds it is credible

and probable to us, that Abraham had not merely a belief or conceit of such a thing, that is, that he was not merely a frantic visionary or enthusiast, but that he really had such a command from God, which he imagines none of our present clergy will undertake to prove.

But our author has fairly let us know, that whatever proof could be produced for it, he would have no regard to it, since he roundly pronounces that it is impossible to be proved. 'That God in this or any other case should dissolve the law of nature, and make it a man's duty as a thing morally reasonable and fit, to act contrary to all the natural principles and passions of the human constitution, is absolutely incredible, and cannot possibly be proved. And upon such a supposition, I defy all the clergy in England to prove that there is any such thing as a law of nature, or that any thing can be just or unjust, morally fit or unfit, antecedent to a positive will. For upon this principle I think it is evident that nothing can be right or wrong, fit or unfit in the reason of things; but that God may command the most unfit or unrighteous things by mere arbitrary will and pleasure. A supposition which must unhinge the whole frame of nature, and leave no human creature any rule of action at all.' And in his great kindness to the clergy he supposes this to be the reason, viz. because it unhinges the whole frame of nature, and leaves men no rule of action at all, this 'is the reason that the hierarchy in all ages and countries have been infinitely fond of such a notion, and have greedily snatched at this instance, in order to set aside the law of nature, and to substitute their own positive laws in the room of it,' pp. 133, 134. By the way I would observe, that the apostle Paul himself, whom this writer calls the 'great freethinker of his age, the bold and brave defender of reason against authority,' p. 74, must be involved in the same accusation of designing to subvert the law of nature; since as I have shown, he highly extols this action of Abraham as a glorious proof of his faith and obedience to God. So that here we have a specimen of our author's regard for the apostle and for Christianity, of which we shall have many instances before we have done.

But let us proceed to a more particular consideration of what he offers. I will grant him, in as strong terms as he pleases, that there is a 'law of nature,' that is, a law that hath a real and just foundation in the very nature of things: and that there is right and wrong, fit and unfit in the very nature and reason of things; that is, there is something in the nature of things that makes it fit and proper for reasonable creatures to act after such or such a manner, in such or such circumstances and relations. Nay further, I will readily own that it is a part of the law of nature, or it is fit in the nature of things, that parents should love their children and cherish them, and endeavour to preserve their lives, and to do them good; and that it is in the nature of things unfit that they should do them hurt, and destroy them. But this is not to be understood in so extensive a sense as if it admitted of no limitation, and as if in no case what-

soever it could ever be lawful for parents to put their children to death. I shall not insist on the laws of several nations, particularly the ancient Roman laws, which gave parents a power of life and death over their own children; but I believe it will scarce be denied that cases may happen where it may become the duty of a parent, if he be at the same time a magistrate, to inflict upon his children a capital punishment, if their crimes require it. And Brutus was always admired by Rome when in its liberty, for causing his sons to be scourged and put to death in his sight, for endeavouring to betray their country. In these instances indeed the children are supposed to be criminal. But let us put the case, that a parent by giving up his own son to death, though the best deserving in the world, and chargeable with no crime, could deliver his country from slavery and ruin, the very law of nature in such a case would make it his duty to control his natural affection to his own offspring, and cause it to give way to a superior law, the good of the public. And as the public good is a sufficient reason for a man's controlling his private affection, and acting contrary in some particular instances to what otherwise would be his duty in private relations, so the command of God, when once it is sufficiently known, in what particular way soever we come to know it, is a good and valid reason for controlling private affections and inclinations.

This writer himself seems willing to own, that in case God should require such a thing, it would be our duty to obey; but then he denies that God can require any such thing. He thinks 'it absolutely incredible that God should in any case dissolve the law of nature, and make it a man's duty as a thing morally reasonable and fit to act contrary to all the natural principles and passions of the human constitution.' But it is far from being true, that God can in no case make it our duty to act contrary to the natural principles and passions of the human constitution: or that his requiring this would be a dissolving the law of nature; at that rate, where are all the noble duties of self-denial and mortification, which our Saviour so much insists upon? When he urges it as our duty to be ready to 'forsake father, and mother, and houses, and lands, yea, and our own lives also for his sake;' and declares, that he that 'loveth any of these more than him is not worthy of him;' is not this to oblige us in such particular instances to contract our natural appetites and passions, and the dearest inclinations and interests of the flesh for the sake of truth and a good conscience? And this is certainly an instance of the most exalted virtue that human nature is capable of. At least, I believe if the case were put, that a man was to lose his life, his liberty, his wife and children, and give them up to death for the sake of his country, this would be owned to be illustrious virtue. However, this I am sure of, that a man that would have asserted the contrary in Greece or Rome, when learning and virtue flourished most there, would have been despised and abhorred as the basest and most abject of men. And any writer that would have maintained

such a thing, would scarce have been thought worthy to live among them. And our love to God ought certainly to be as strong in us as love to our country; yea, and superior too, since we owe more to God than to any man, or to all men together. And if to control and overrule our private natural affections and interests in such cases be no breach of the law of nature, but be rather a glorious instance of the most eminent and consummate piety and virtue, and a fulfilling the noblest and highest part of that law, whereby we are obliged to prefer the public to our own private good, and to love God above all, and yield the most entire unreserved subjection and obedience to him; then I cannot see how it can be thought unworthy of God, the supreme Governor of the world, who has an absolute dominion over his creatures, to lay injunctions upon them in some extraordinary instances with this very view, to exercise and manifest this noble disposition, and give it an opportunity of exerting itself: still taking this along with us, which we may be sure will always be the case, that however difficult and shocking such a trial may at present appear to be, yet a wise and good God will take care that it shall be crowned in the issue with a proportionably higher reward, and shall upon the whole turn to the person's own greater glory and happiness.

Of this kind was the command given to Abraham to sacrifice his beloved son. God did not command him absolutely to hate his son, which would have been a wrong affection of mind, and scarce possible to be obeyed. On the contrary, the command itself went upon the supposition of his loving him. 'Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and offer him up,' Gen. xxii. 2. At the same time that he loved him so tenderly he was to offer him up to God; and it was because he loved him so much that the trial was so great. It is evident that the proper design of this command was for the trial and exercise of his faith and virtue; for it appears from the event that God did not give this command to Abraham with an intention that he should actually execute it, but to give him an opportunity of showing the excellent temper and disposition of his mind, the strength of his faith and trust in God, and his entire unreserved submission to his authority and will; in a word to discover that exalted pitch of piety and virtue to which he had arrived; by proposing to him one of the most difficult and trying instances of obedience that can possibly be conceived. And this the divine wisdom thought fit to do, in order to exhibit a most illustrious example to all succeeding generations, of the mighty power, and force of divine faith and love, and how far we should carry our submission to God, and our resignation to his authority and will: that we must be ready to exercise the most difficult acts of self-denial, to which God shall see fit to call us, and to renounce for his sake those things that are dearest to us here on earth, and not suffer any private affections or interests to come in competition with the duty and subjection we owe to the supreme universal Lord: and that we must exercise an implicit dependence on his supreme wisdom, and faithfulness and goodness, even where

we do not at present see the reasons of things, and where all appearances seem to be contrary, and to put on a dark and discouraging aspect.

These are noble dispositions, and some of the most exalted acts of homage and duty which a reasonable creature can possibly yield to the supreme Lord of the universe, the greatest and the best of beings. And these are some of the admirable lessons which this example teacheth us; and which we may suppose the divine wisdom had in view, in such a command as this to him who is honoured with the character of 'the Father of the Faithful.' And the answering such valuable and excellent ends is sufficient to justify the wisdom and fitness of this command; which taken in this view, appears plainly to have been designed for promoting the universal good, and for exhibiting a glorious and beautiful example to the whole moral world.

But though for such wise and excellent ends God thought fit to give such a command, yet it must still be remembered that he did not suffer Abraham actually to accomplish it. He did not hinder it till the moment of execution, that Abraham's obedience might more fully appear, which was as eminent as if he had actually done it. But then he interposed to prevent it by an extraordinary voice from heaven. From whence we see the great wisdom and goodness of God; that though he would have his children ready to do the most difficult things when he requires them, yet he would not suffer any thing to be done, even in this most singular and extraordinary instance, that should countenance the inhuman practice of sacrificing children, and that should look like unnatural cruelty in his worship.

And now upon the whole, the true question, and the only one in which we are concerned, is this, Whether God might not in an extraordinary instance take this mode of procedure, for trying the faith and obedience of his servant? I cannot see any thing in this supposition as now stated, that is contrary to the divine wisdom and goodness. Doth it follow that because God saw fit in an extraordinary instance to give this command to try Abraham, though he did not suffer him to accomplish it, that therefore there is no law of nature, no such thing as 'right or wrong, just or unjust, morally fit or unfit?' It is evident there is no consequence at all in this way of arguing. Indeed, if God had published a general law, declaring that it should be henceforth lawful for parents to hate, hurt, and destroy their offspring at pleasure, and that they should be under no obligations to love, cherish and provide for them; this would be a dissolving that part of the law of nature. And it might justly be concluded, that such a general law as this could not possibly proceed from God, or be consistent with his wisdom and goodness. But it does not follow that because God, who is the Sovereign Lord of the universe, and hath an absolute power over the lives of his creatures, may in an extraordinary instance, for wise ends, command a parent to take away the life of his own child, that therefore all parents are allowed to hate

and destroy their own offspring, and are freed from any obligations to love and take care of them. The general law is still as much in force as before, that parents are obliged to love and cherish their children, and to use their best endeavours to preserve their lives in all cases, except a particular case should happen, in which the public good or the express command of God himself should require the contrary. And that general law must always necessarily in the nature of things be understood with this limitation; and whenever this limitation doth take place in any particular instance, it doth not at all vacate or dissolve the general law.

Nor does it follow, as this author suggests, that on 'this supposition God may command the most unfit or unrighteous things, by mere arbitrary will and pleasure;' if by unfit and unrighteous things he means things that are unfit and unrighteous for God to do. For the righteous God can never do a thing that is unrighteous: but then that may be fit and righteous for him to do or to require towards us, which it would not be fit and righteous for one man to do or to require towards another. For it would be wrong to suppose that God is in all cases bound by our laws. His right and dominion over us is of a peculiar and transcendent nature, and not to be measured by our scanty rules, but by what is much superior to them, that is, by what appears to his own infinite mind to be, all things considered, fit and right, and best and properest in the whole. He who has an absolute right over our lives and properties, can whenever he pleases, without injustice, deprive us of our worldly substance, or take from one and give to another; he can afflict us and exercise us with troubles whenever he sees fit for the trial of our patience, submission and resignation; yea, and can take away the lives of the most excellent and useful persons without injustice; because in this case he only doeth what he hath a right to do: whereas in men it would be unjust to do so, because they have no right to do it, and no such absolute dominion over one another. There are some things indeed which God cannot command or require of his reasonable creatures, because they have an inseparable and eternal malignity, and can in no possible circumstances of things ever be fit and right; as, to command a reasonable creature to hate God, to blaspheme him, or renounce him, or to prefer other things before him. There are other things which he cannot do, not because he is tied down to the same precise rules that bind us, but because his own wisdom and goodness will not suffer him to do them. Thus he cannot make an innocent creature eternally miserable. But there is nothing to hinder but that he may make innocent creatures undergo great hardships and afflictions, and calamities for a time, for the trial of their virtue: though in such a case we may justly conclude from his goodness, that he will abundantly compensate their sufferings by a glorious reward. And if God should in an extraordinary instance require a parent to offer up his own child, with an intention that he should really execute it, which is not the present case; and should afterwards as a reward of so difficult and trying an obedi-

ence raise both father and son to a higher happiness and felicity, which we may reasonably conclude in such a case he would do; I can see nothing in such a procedure that could be proved to be contrary not only to justice but to goodness. Because on such a supposition, as God would do nothing but what he hath a right to do by virtue of his absolute dominion over the lives of his creatures, so let the hardship appear never so great for the present, it is designed to be recompensed by a glorious reward for transcending the greatness of the trial; and both father and son, instead of having an irreparable injury done them, would have their final and greatest happiness secured and promoted upon the whole.

Nor would it follow on this supposition, as the author alleges, that God 'acts by mere arbitrary will and pleasure;' if by that he means unreasonable will. For God hath always reasons for his own acting in every instance; wise and just reasons obvious to his own infinite understanding, though these reasons are not always known to us. And particularly in Abraham's case, God did not act by mere arbitrary will, but for wise reasons, some of which have been already represented.

As to what he adds, that it would 'unhinge the whole frame of nature, and leave no human creature any rule of action at all,' there is no just foundation for this reflection. It makes no alteration in the general laws of nature, or in the rules of men's conduct towards one another, or in the fitness or unfitness of the duties that result from such or such relations. The obligations of the paternal and filial relation are no way altered by it, but are still as strong as ever. All that can be concluded from it is, that though we are to love our children or parents, we are to love God more, and that we must yield an absolute unreserved submission to the Supreme Being, and make all private affections and interests give way, whenever they happen to come in competition with the duty we owe to him. And this is no new law, but is properly an eminent branch of the law of nature, of immutable obligation, and which is necessarily founded in the nature and reason of things, and the relations between God and us. It can never possibly cease to oblige us in any one particular instance; whereas the law of our particular relations may in some particular extraordinary cases or circumstances cease to oblige, or give way to higher obligations, then and there incumbent upon us.

Thus I have largely considered the case of Abraham, because this writer is pleased to lay so mighty a stress upon it, and because the authority and credit of the sacred writings is very nearly concerned in it, in which Abraham's faith and obedience in this instance is highly commended.

CHAPTER VI.

The Moral Philosopher's Account of the Original of Sacrifices and of the Priesthood, and of Joseph's first establishing an independent priesthood in Egypt. The Representation he makes of the Mosaic Priesthood, considered. The Priests had not the Government of the Nation vested in them by that Constitution, nor were they exempted from the jurisdiction of the Law, nor had an Interest separate from and inconsistent with the State. Concerning the Church Revenues established by the Law of Moses. The particular Manner of providing for the Maintenance of the Priests and Levites accounted for. The Author's Pretence, that it was an insufferable Burden and Impoverishment to the People, and the Cause of their frequent Revoltings to Idolatry, examined. Some Observations concerning the sacrifices prescribed under the Mosaic Economy. The Author's Objections against them considered. No Sacrifices were to be offered in Cases where civil Penalties were expressly appointed by Law, and why. The atoning Virtue of the Sacrifices supposed to consist in the sprinkling of the Blood. This shown not to be a priestly Cheat, but appointed for wise reasons.

I NOW return to our author's objections against the law of Moses. He frequently shows how angry he is with the constitutions there made about the priesthood. And this seems to be one principal reason of the strange virulence he every where expresses against that law.

It is scarce worth while to take notice of the account he pretends to give of the original of the priesthood and sacrifices. He represents sacrifices as having been originally nothing but feasts of good fellowship. p. 237. Though how this will agree to holocausts or whole burnt offerings, which seem to have been the most ancient oblations, see Gen. viii. 20; xv. 9, 10, &c.; Job i. 5; xlii. 8, in which the whole was burnt and consumed to the honour of God, and no part of it left to the offerer, is hard to see. But our author's design in this seems purely to be to bring in the priests for the honour of being 'the chief butlers, bakers, butchers, and cooks,' in these feasts, for so he represents them. And I suppose he will allow the same honour to the princes, patriarchs, and great men, whilst they continued to manage the sacrifices 'in person,' as he owns they at first did. His account of the Egyptian priesthood, and of Joseph's erecting them into an independency on the crown, though he pretends to give it us for history, is purely of his own imagination. He would have it thought, that Joseph having married the high priest's daughter, by his interest obtained a grant from the king to render their lands unalienable; because it is said their 'land became not Pharaoh's,' when the 'rest of the land of Egypt became his, p. 239. But it is evident from the story he himself refers to, that this was owing to their not being under a necessity to sell their lands to him as the other Egyptians did, to procure corn for themselves and their families, as having their por-

tion of meat assigned them from Pharaoh. And the sending them this allowance is represented as the act not of Joseph, but of Pharaoh himself; who in this probably followed an ancient custom, see Gen. xlvii. 22—26. As to Joseph's marrying the high priest's daughter, for so our author has it, (though Potipherah, whose daughter he married, is not called the high priest, but the Priest of On): this instead of proving that the priests owed all their dignity to Joseph, plainly shows that they were persons of great eminence before, since when Pharaoh was doing Joseph the greatest honour, and made him next to himself in power and dignity, and ruler over all the land of Egypt, he gave him a priest's daughter to wife. For this marriage was evidently of Pharaoh's own procuring, Gen. xli. 45. And it appeareth from the most ancient accounts we have of the Egyptians, that their priests were men of great dignity and authority, and probably took in all the prime nobility, and heads of the most ancient and honourable families. Concerning which see Shuckford's *Sacred and Pofane History*, vol. ii. p. 120, &c.

I shall proceed to consider the account he gives of the priesthood under the Mosaical constitution. He tells us, p. 26, that 'Moses constituted a priesthood, which was to govern the nation as prime ministers, representatives, and vicegerents of God, and to drain all the wealth and treasures of the kingdom into the church, as they must necessarily have done had his law been strictly executed, p. 42, and that the tribe of Levi did not make a sixtieth part of the whole body, and yet it would be easy to prove that the church revenues under this government amounted to full twenty shillings in the pound upon all the lands of Israel.' And then he puts a question, which would be very proper if the matter was as he represents it; 'How came the people to be reconciled to this?' To which he answers in short, 'that they were never reconciled to it all. Their national established worship was so prodigiously expensive, and their clergy or priests, and Levites, such absolute masters of property, that they took all occasions to revolt, and were glad to serve any other gods that would accept them upon easier terms,' p. 128, 129. He affirms 'that the Levites, though servants in the temple were courtiers with the king's livery, and had greater rights and immunities than any prince or first magistrate of another tribe. Levi was a tribe exempted from the jurisdiction of the law and protected against it, as plainly appears from the instance of the drunken Levite and his concubine,' p. 142. And he repeats it again in the next page, that 'this instance plainly shows, that there was no law for priests and Levites at that time;' he goes on to say, p. 142; that 'under the law of Moses the priests had an interest separate from and inconsistent with the interest of the state or society, and that he looks upon this to be the true state of the case under the Mosaical economy, and by the essential constitution of that law.'

That the priesthood had the government of the nation in their hands according to the Mosaic institution, as this author suggests,

is far from being true. Moses had the chief government in his own hands during his lifetime, while Aaron was high priest; and he did not vest the government after his decease in Eleazar the high priest, but appointed Joshua, who was not of the tribe of Levi, to succeed him in the government of the people. Afterwards, when the nation was governed by judges for some hundreds of years, in whom the supreme power resided, they were taken indifferently out of every tribe, as it pleased God to appoint; but not one of them was the high priest, nor of the priestly order, or of the tribe of Levi, till Eli and Samuel, the last of the judges. They were afterwards governed by kings till the Babylonish captivity, who had it in their power to depose the high priest, as Solomon did Abiathar. In a word, the judging and governing the people is never once mentioned in the law, as properly belonging to the high priest's office.

The inferior judges that were appointed by Moses to judge the people, Exod. xviii. 20, 21, Deut. i. 13, 15, and afterwards the seventy elders, whom God appointed to assist Moses in the greater and more difficult causes, which the inferior judges were not able to decide, were chosen out of all the tribes, and not that of Levi only, Numb. xi. 16, 17, 25; and it is agreed by all the Jews that the great Sanhedrim or council, the supreme court of judicature, of whose power they say such great things, consisted not merely of priests and Levites, but of any other persons of other tribes that were qualified by their knowledge of the Law; and Maimonides saith, 'that even if there were not one priest or Levite there, it was a lawful judicatory; and that the high priest did not sit there merely by virtue of his place or birth, except his knowledge in the law was such as fitted him for it.' Concerning this, see Selden de Synedr., lib. ii. cap. 18, §. 1.

And whereas this writer pretends, that 'even the Levites, though servants in the temple, had greater rights and immunities than any prince or first magistrate of another tribe; and that Levi was a tribe exempted from the jurisdiction of the law and protected against it;' this is entirely false; there are no such immunities or exemptions from the jurisdiction of the law allowed to priests and Levites by the Mosaical constitution. The judges are commanded to judge all persons and causes without respect of persons, and to take criminals even from the altar. Exod. xxi. 14: 'If a man come presumptuously upon his neighbour to slay him with guile, thou shalt take him from mine altar, that he may die;' that is, as the most eminent Jewish authors interpret it, though he were a priest and were then ministering at the altar, ready to sacrifice, he was to be taken thence: and the Jerusalem Targum expressly saith, although it were the high priest that was then ministering, they were to take him from the altar and put him to death. And so far is it from being true, that the whole tribe of Levi was exempted from the jurisdiction of the law, that it is agreed amongst the Jews, that even the high priest himself as well as others was subject to the jurisdiction even of the lesser courts; yea, to the least of them all, the tribunal of three, in causes that came before those courts;

and that whether he committed any thing against the affirmative or negative precepts of the law, he was accounted as one of the common people, and that in every cause belonging to him. So the Gemara Babylon. Tit. Sanhedr. See all this fully shown by the most learned author above cited, de Synedr., lib. ii. cap. 8, §. 1, 3, and cap. x. §. 6. The proof this writer pretends to bring from the case of the Levite and his concubine is ridiculous. What the Levite had done contrary to law, or wherein he was protected against the jurisdiction of the law is hard to know. But I suppose because he was a Levite, our author thinks that not only his wife should be abused and murdered with impunity, but he ought to have been punished for complaining of it. Not those that did the outrage were to be called to an account for it, but the poor Levite that suffered it. This is the immunity he seems willing to give the Levites, an immunity from having common justice done them, and the privilege of being injured and outraged with impunity.

It is in the same strain of misrepresentation he concludes, that under the law of Moses the priest 'had an interest separate from and inconsistent with the interest of the state or society;' and that he looks upon this to be the 'true state of the case under the Mosaic economy, and by the essential constitution of that law.' Under that economy, as I have already observed, there were no proper ecclesiastical immunities, if by these be meant the priests being exempted from the jurisdiction of the law, and from being judged in the common courts in all causes equally with others. Nor were there any such things strictly speaking as purely ecclesiastical judicatories under that constitution. Those of other tribes joined with the Levites in the judicatories, and even in the greatest of all, the Sanhedrim itself, to which the ultimate appeal lay in all causes ecclesiastical as well as civil; as Selden shows in the place above quoted. So that the priests were not a body separate from and independent of the state, but incorporated with it; except that the peculiar duties of their office, as the offering up of sacrifices, officiating at the tabernacle or temple, &c., was to be done by none but themselves. Upon the whole, there was by the essential constitution of that law a harmony between the civil and ecclesiastical powers; and accordingly under their best kings and governors, when their law was most strictly observed, and in the most flourishing times of their state, we find them contributing mutual assistance and support to one another.

As to their Church revenues, if he could prove, as he says he easily could, that they 'had full twenty shillings in the pound upon all the lands of Israel, he might justly say that they 'drained all the treasures of the kingdom into the church.' But such a wild assertion as this deserves no answer, and only shows that this writer throws out any thing at random, by which he may vent his spleen against the priests, without being at all solicitous whether it be agreeable to truth or decency.

He remarks, that the tribe 'of Levi was but a sixtieth part of the people;' and it will be easily granted that when they were first

numbered in the wilderness they were but few in proportion to the rest of the people; but as the nation was divided into a certain number of tribes, and the Levites were one whole tribe, it was but just that in the general division they should be considered and provided for as such; and that when the method of their subsistence and maintenance was settled for all succeeding generations, regard should be had not only to their present number, which then happened to be far smaller than that of any other tribe, but to what it might prove afterwards; for the numbers of persons in the same tribe often differed mightily at different times; and particularly in the tribe of Levi, we find it sometimes bearing a much greater proportion to the number of the people, than it did at their being first numbered in the wilderness.

But methinks this writer, who seems to have such frightful notions of 'a landed clergy,' and who makes their having a large share of unalienable lands vested in them, the chief source of the great ascendancy they obtained both over kings and people, should have more favourable thoughts of the priesthood established by the Mosaic constitution, since they were so far from having a third part of the lands of Canaan in their possession, as Diodorus tells us*, the priests 'had a third of the whole land of Egypt,' that they had not, properly speaking, any lands settled upon them at all by the original constitution of that law, except that there were cities assigned them in the several tribes to dwell in with lands round them, which were not to extend to above a thousand cubits, for their accommodation in their dwellings. But the tribe of Levi had no inheritance in the land assigned them, when the rest of the tribes had theirs. This is often repeated in the law, and that it should be a 'statute for ever throughout their generations,' Numb. xviii. 20, 23, 24, Deut. x. 9. If, therefore, there had not been a liberal provision made for them otherwise, their condition would have been much worse than any of the other tribes, which God did not think fit to suffer, as they were more immediately to attend his service in the tabernacle or temple, and were designed to teach and instruct the people. For that this whole tribe was particularly designed to instruct the people in the law, is evident from many passages, particularly Lev. x. 2; Deut. xxxiii. 10; 2 Chron. xvii. 7, 8; xxx. 22; Neh. viii. 7, 9; Mal. ii. 4—7. And to engage them to be more diligent and careful in instructing the people in the right knowledge of the law, may be probably supposed to have been one reason of the particular manner of their maintenance prescribed under that constitution. For it is evident, that the subsistence of the Levites, but especially of the priests, very much depended on the people's close observance of the law of Moses, without a pretty good acquaintance with which they could not be so exact in bringing the oblations in the several cases and occasions there prescribed. So that this made it to be the interest of the priests and Levites themselves, that the people should not be igno-

* Diod. Sicul., lib. i.

rant of that law. It also tended to make them more diligent in their own offices, and in observing the laws and constitutions of the public worship at the tabernacle or temple, from which their subsistence in a great measure arose. And besides, in this method of providing for them, the people had a better opportunity given them of showing their readiness and good will, than if they had had large independent settlements in land : and indeed, Philo tells us,* concerning many of the Jews in his time, speaking of the first fruits, &c., belonging to the priests, that ‘ they prevented the demanding of them, and paid them even before they were due, and as if they had rather been receiving a benefit than giving any ; and that both sexes brought them in with such a readiness and alacrity, and studious zeal, as is beyond expression.’

It comes in very properly to be observed here, that several things which are looked upon as mightily contributing to promote the power and wealth of the priests, had no place at all in the Mosaic constitution. This writer observes that when once the Egyptian priests had obtained such an ascendant in that country, ‘ Egypt became the parent and patronage of new gods ; for every new god brought a new revenue to the priests.’ And it is observed, by a noble writer, that in ‘ the early days of this ancient priestly nation, it was thought expedient, for the increase of devotion, to enlarge their systems of deity, and to multiply their revealed objects of worship, and raise new personages of divinity in their religion.’ And he supposes the vast number of their gods and of their temples in Egypt to be the contrivance of their priests for the increase of their own power and riches. And among the many methods for advancing the interests of the priesthood, he particularly reckons the having ‘ new modes of worship, new heroes, saints, divinities, which serve as new occasions for sacred donatives.†’ Now it is undeniably evident that there was no place for any of these things in the law of Moses : no ‘ new modes of worship,’ no ‘ new divinities’ allowed, no worship of ‘ saints’ and ‘ heroes,’ no variety of temples.’ As there was but one God to be worshipped, the only living and true God, so there was but one sanctuary or temple allowed at which all their sacrifices were to be offered. So that many of these things, which are represented as mighty sources of priestly wealth and power, were not at all admitted under that constitution.

But yet as it pleased God for wise ends to choose out a nation to himself to be erected into a peculiar polity, whose very constitution was founded in the acknowledgment and worship of that one ‘ true God,’ at the same time that the whole world about them was overspread with idolatry ; and as it pleased him that there should be a great deal of pompous ceremony in his worship, without which, as the temper of the world was, it would probably have been neglected and disregarded, and the people apt to revolt to the pompous and splendid idolatries of their neighbouring countries ;

* Cited by Selden, *History of Tithes*. Review, chap. ii.

† *Characteristics*, vol. iii. pp. 43, 44, 49, 50.

so he saw it fit that those that were to be employed as priests and ministers in his immediate worship and service, should be handsomely provided for; without which, in those circumstances of things, they would have been in danger of falling into contempt, and have lain under a greater temptation to set about inventing new modes of worship, new temples, deities, and altars. It is certain, that in all other countries in those early ages, the persons officiating in the sacred rites and ceremonies were of considerable rank and figure; and it did not seem fit that among that people which above all others peculiarly made profession of worshipping the one true God, those that were set apart to the immediate service and worship of the God of heaven and earth, should be in a mean and indigent condition.

But though the provision made for the priests and Levites by 'tithes, first-fruits, oblations,' and other dues settled on them by that law, was sufficient to give them a handsome subsistence, supposing them regularly paid*; yet it has been greatly magnified by some, though never so unreasonably by any as by this author; and to swell the account, they have thrown in the second tithe, as if this also belonged peculiarly to the Levites; and yet by the express direction of the law it was to be spent by the owners in entertaining themselves and their households, their men-servants and maid-servants, that they might all rejoice together in the place which the Lord should choose. Therefore it is usually called by the Jews the 'owner's tithe;' and the Levites were admitted to partake of these entertainments. And every third year it was to be spent at their own places of abode, and more peculiarly designed for the entertainment and benefit of the poor, the stranger, the widow, and the fatherless. And therefore it is usually called by the Jews the 'poor man's tithe.' These things were designed, under that constitution, for maintaining and enlarging mutual benevolence, and brotherly love and charity. And notwithstanding the complaints this writer makes of the impoverishment and insufferable burdens laid upon that people, yet in fact it appears from the whole history of their nation, that they were never so happy and flourishing at home, and so much respected abroad, as when they kept close to the observance of their law. Their cheerful obedience was fully compensated by blessings poured forth upon them in great abundance, as it had been expressly promised them in that covenant. It is certain their greatest and best men always looked upon the law of Moses as their special privilege and advantage, whereby they were gloriously distinguished above other nations, which they would never have done if they had looked

* Yet it must be owned, that this method of maintenance, though chosen, as I have already hinted, for wise ends, was much more precarious than if they had had rich independent revenues in land settled on them. And though many of the people, and the best of them, rendered those dues cheerfully, yet no doubt they often suffered through the ill-will or avarice of others; and to make amends for what they must unavoidably suffer in this way, we may well suppose to be one reason why their allowance was made large, and to arise from various things.

upon it to have been such a miserable, enslaving, impoverishing constitution, as this author represents it. Nor do I find they made any grievous complaints about the maintenance provided for the priests and Levites. Solomon, who was a very wise man, and a great king, gives it as his advice, Prov. iii. 9, 10, 'Honour the Lord with thy substance, and with the first-fruits of thine increase' (which were appointed by the law to be given to the priests), 'so shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst with new wine.' From whence it appears, that he was far from being of opinion that they would be impoverished and ruined, by what they liberally and cheerfully expended in obedience to the law. And the author of Ecclesiasticus, of whose wisdom this writer seems to express a good opinion, p. 218, adviseth to 'honour the priest, and give him his portion, as it is commanded, the first-fruits, and the trespass-offering,' &c., chap. vii. 31.

Our author, indeed, takes upon him to pronounce that the Jews were never reconciled to this at all; and he is pleased to charge all their idolatries to the account of it. 'Their national established worship was so prodigiously expensive, and their clergy or priests and Levites, such absolute masters of their property' (one would think by his representation, that they had all the lands of Israel in their possession), 'that they took all occasions to revolt, and were glad to serve any other gods, that would accept them upon easier terms.' Thus he hath found out a good excuse for the frequent idolatries of the Jews. At other times he charges this conduct on the gross stupidity, and 'constitutional national blindness of that wretched Egyptianized people:' but here he is pleased to pity the poor people, and lays the blame of all upon their law, which laid such a burden upon them, that it was impossible for them to live under it. There is as much foundation for this as for many others of this author's reflections. But how comes it that the Jews themselves never pretended this as a reason, or at least an excuse for their revolts? The truth is, if this was the reason of their going over to the idolatrous worship of the neighbouring nations, they would not have gained much by the change. The priests in other countries were of great power and influence; and it appears, by the most ancient accounts, that the public worship and ceremonies of religion were vastly expensive, and their sacrifices such as could not be maintained and performed but at a very great charge.* And besides, we find the Jews, in their most degenerate times, were often willing enough to offer multitudes of sacrifices to the Lord, and to other gods too; which one should think would rather have added to their expenses than diminished them. The truth of the matter is, it was not their being oppressed by the priests, and reduced to poverty by the expensiveness of their public worship that drove them into idolatry; but it was usually in a time of peace and plenty, and when they began to grow rich that they forgot the Lord, see Deut. xxxi. 20, 21, xxxii. 15. This

* See Shuckford's Sacred and Profane History, vol. ii. p. 209.

brought on a corruption and dissoluteness of manners, which produced a neglect of religion, and a conformity to the idolatrous customs of the neighbouring nations. Nor need we go any farther to account for this, than the corruption of the human nature, and that strange proneness that hath appeared in mankind in all ages (the wisest nations not excepted) to superstition and false worship, and to imitate the ill customs of others, especially when they were such as tended to the gratification of vicious inclinations and appetites. And of this kind were many of the rites performed to the heathen deities. But with regard to the Jews, this is certain, that their revolting from the religion and worship prescribed in their law, was usually followed with great calamities. And when they were reduced to affliction and distress, this brought them to serious reflections upon their guilt and folly. They then sought unto the Lord, and were glad to return to the observance of his law, sensible not only that it was their duty, but that their happiness depended upon it.

Here it may not be improper to take notice of the objections raised by this writer against the law of Moses, on the account of the constitutions there made concerning expiatory sacrifices, which he represents as most absurd and unreasonable, and as a gross fallacy and imposition upon the common sense and understanding of men. But before I enter on a particular consideration of his objections, it is proper to observe, that sacrifices were not first originally appointed in the law of Moses; they had been in use long before. The first act of religion that we read of after the fall was the offering of sacrifice. And it is probable that it was originally of divine appointment, and communicated to our first parents, together with the original promise, both to keep alive upon the minds of men, a sense of the evil of sin, and God's just displeasure against it, and to be a visible pledge of his pardoning mercy. It was an act of religion that soon spread universally among all nations, and scarce any other account can be given of his having so early and universally obtained, but that it was derived by a tradition from the first parents and progenitors of the human race, who recommended it to their posterity as a rite of religion acceptable to God, and which he himself had appointed. Afterwards, when men fell off from the worship of the only true God to idols, they offered sacrifices to them as well as prayers and other acts of divine worship. This was the state of things when the law of Moses was given. Sacrifices were every where offered, though for the most part to idols. In that law God prescribed sacrifices to be offered to his divine majesty, as they had been by good men before, probably by his own appointment, and strictly prohibited the offering them to any other. Many particular regulations were made, and orders given relating to those sacrifices. And in order to prevent their falling into the idolatrous usages of the neighbouring nations, they were forbidden to offer any other sacrifices, or with any other rites than were there expressly prescribed: some of which rites probably had been derived from the ancient Patriarchs, others were

then first instituted in opposition to the rites of the idolatrous nations, and to preserve the Israelites from a conformity to them. These rites and ordinances relating to sacrifices were wrought into the Mosaic constitution, and so ordered by divine wisdom as among other ends and uses to be the types and shadows of good things to come, under a more perfect dispensation to which that was designed to be subservient, and in which all these sacrifices were to be entirely superseded by an oblation of a far superior nature, and of infinitely greater virtue.

But let us now consider the attempt our author makes to expose the ordinances of the law of Moses relating to expiatory sacrifices. He observes, 'that there could be no commutation or exchange of punishment under the law as a favour or matter of grace from any of those sacrifices. The penalty, whatever it was, supposing the offence proved, must be executed as the law enjoined, and there could be no such thing as any pardon under that constitution. In all capital cases, the offender, upon legal proof or conviction, must die the death, and no sacrifice could exempt him. And in all cases where the law had not provided death, but some pecuniary mulct or personal labour and servitude upon non-payment, this penalty was to be strictly executed, and none could plead any privilege or exemption by sacrifice. And he thinks he may venture to say universally, that no other penalty, of what nature or kind soever, was ever taken off, or mitigated on the account of sacrifice. He observes farther, that the persons entitled to this atonement were supposed to be guilty of no fault after they had satisfied the law in making their offering, or paying their fine, which if they had not done, no atonement could be accepted. And therefore he concludes, that the making the atonement or virtue of these sacrifices, to consist only and absolutely in the priest's sprinkling the sacrificial blood, as was done under that amazing constitution, as he calls it, was nothing else but a priestly cheat, and gross imposition.*' pp. 126—128.

To clear this matter I shall offer some observations that may give some light into the Mosaic constitutions about sacrifices, and may serve to obviate our author's exceptions.

First, Under that constitution there were no sacrifices prescribed at all for those crimes against which death was denounced, or any particular penalties appointed by law. And there is very good reason for this. If the offering sacrifices had in such cases exempted persons that were legally convicted of those crimes from the legal obligation to punishment, it would have had a very bad effect on the public. And if persons could have escaped punishments for the greatest crimes merely on their offering sacrifices, this constitution would have been much more inveighed against, and with much more reason, as inconsistent with the preservation

* As to the use he makes of some of these assertions against the doctrine of Christ's satisfaction, the proper place for considering this, will be when we examine his exceptions against that doctrine.

of civil order, and the good of society, and as a dispensing with and vacating all the laws of the commonwealth. Where, therefore, it was judged necessary for the good of the community, that the penalties should be actually inflicted on persons guilty of such crimes, in these cases no sacrifices were appointed. Because as sacrifices were supposed to obtain pardon, and to avert the punishment that was due for the crime on the account of which they were offered, it was not proper to appoint sacrifices by law for crimes which it was thought necessary for the public good to punish.

Another remark I would make with regard to these expiatory sacrifices is, that in cases where sacrifices were appointed to be offered, they were never supposed to be of any avail, or to entitle a person to pardon without repentance, which if they had been supposed to have done, this constitution would have had a very bad influence on religion : hence in the sacrifices that were to be offered for any sin or fault, the person that had offended was obliged to lay 'his hand upon the head of the victim, and to confess his sins,' especially that particular sin on the account of which the sacrifice was offered, and to declare his repentance for it, as appears from Lev. v. 5. And in cases where persons had done any damage to their neighbour, they were not only to confess it, but to make restitution of what they had wrongfully taken. And it is a general rule, that sacrifices were never ordered but in cases where the offender was supposed to be penitent. When a person had sinned through ignorance, and came afterwards to be sensible of it; or if he had sinned knowingly and wilfully, and afterwards was brought to a true repentance, and of his own accord acknowledged it, when it could not be proved against him; in such cases as these sacrifices were to be offered, as may be seen in the laws about the sin-offering and the trespass-offering, Lev. iv. 5, 6. But in case of obstinate impenitency and presumptuous sinning with a high hand, no sacrifices were admitted. From whence it appears, that the legal sacrifices were not designed to draw men off from real substantial piety and righteousness, or to serve instead of it, but rather supposed the absolute necessity of repentance in order to forgiveness, and that no pardon could be expected without it.

Another thing that it is proper to observe with regard to the expiatory sacrifices under the law, is, that the atoning virtue of those sacrifices was supposed principally to consist in the blood of the victim, which was 'shed and sprinkled' on or towards the altar. And this is what our author cries out against as a priestly cheat and gross imposition : he would fain know what 'atonements or propitiation could signify under a law that admitted no pardon?' If by saying that the law admitted no pardon, he means, that where the law denounced any particular penalty against a particular crime, the law itself did not appoint that penalty to be remitted, which it appointed to be inflicted for that crime, it is very true. And to suppose the contrary would be very absurd. For no law dispenses with the penalty which that law expressly enjoins : and therefore it

was; that in cases where the Mosaical law expressly appointed particular penalties for particular crimes no sacrifice was admitted, because the law did not intend the penalties should be dispensed with in these cases, but if by saying 'that law admitted no pardon' he intends that there was no such thing as pardon or remission of sins at all under that constitution, it is a great mistake, for the very appointment of expiatory sacrifices shows, there was pardon under that constitution, and necessarily supposes it. For in cases where sacrifices were appointed to be offered, it is expressly declared, that upon a man's confessing his fault, and offering the sacrifice, 'the sin which he had committed should be forgiven him.'

But still it is urged, that this was only a priestly cheat, since really nothing was forgiven, and he was freed from no penalty on the account of the sacrifice. But how doth this writer prove that he was freed from no penalty on the account of the sacrifice? It is certain that in cases where sacrifices were appointed to be offered for any crime, the man that offended was not subjected by law to any penalty for that crime, as he was with regard to crimes for which sacrifices were not appointed to be offered. For which this reason is to be given, that the sacrifice was supposed to avert the penalty, and therefore sacrifices were not suffered to be offered in cases where it was necessary for the good of the community, that the penalty should be actually inflicted. Thus, e. g. in cases of stealing or defrauding, if the thief was taken and legally convicted, he was to 'restore double' if the ox, or ass, or sheep which he had taken was found alive with him; but if he had killed or sold it, he was to 'restore four or five fold;' and if he could not do this he was to be sold, *Exod. xxii. 1, 2, 3*. And in such cases no sacrifice was appointed at all: because it was intended, and was judged necessary for the good of the public, that the penalty should be actually executed. But if a man had taken any thing wrongfully from his neighbour, and had even sworn falsely concerning it, and could not be legally convicted, or the crime proved upon him, if afterwards he sincerely repented of his crime, and came of himself and acknowledged his guilt, in that case he was appointed to bring a sacrifice, and then the penalty which was appointed in the other case was not to be inflicted on him. He was obliged only to restore the principal, and add a fifth part thereto, which was no more than was proper to make amends to the owner for the damage he might have sustained in being for some time without the use of what had been taken from him, see *Lev. vi. 2*. And this was not properly a mulct or penalty, but a just restitution, which was necessary to shew the sincerity of the repentance he professed for his crime. So that we see that in cases where the mulct or penalty was actually insisted on by law, sacrifices were not appointed to be offered; and where the sacrifices were appointed to be offered, the mulct or penalty, which would have been otherwise due, was to be remitted. And by this we may see how true it is which he ventures to pronounce universally, that 'no other penalty of what nature or kind soever was ever taken off or mitigated on the account of sacrifice.'

But perhaps it will be said, that in these cases the sacrifices themselves were the penalty required by law. He tells us 'that in innumerable cases of accident or inadvertency, which was made penal by the law, the sacrifice as a deodand or fine to the church was the whole penalty. And where a sacrifice was ordered with a pecuniary mulct, one part of the fine was due to the state, and the other to the church.' But sacrifices were offered in many cases that were not owing merely to inadvertency, but where the sin had been deliberate and wilful, though afterwards sincerely repented of, as is evident from the instances mentioned, Lev. vi. 2, 3. And in these cases it is manifest that the sacrifice was not regarded or prescribed as a punishment, but as a means to free the offender from punishment; and the reason why no punishment was enjoined where sacrifices were ordered, was not because the sacrifice itself was a punishment, but because the sacrifice was supposed to free the person in the eye of the law from the guilt he had contracted, and thereby avert the punishment to which otherwise he must have been obnoxious. As to his insinuation that the sacrifice was only a fine to the church, one should think, if this had been the case, they would have been allowed to commute the sacrifice for money, which yet was never admitted. And whereas he adds, that 'where a sacrifice was ordered with a pecuniary mulct one part of the fine was due to the state, and the other to the church;' he would have done well to have told us what sacrifices were ordered with pecuniary mulcts. In cases where mulcts were ordered by law, which was only where a real damage had been done by any man to his neighbour, the mulct or fine if he will call it so, was to be paid to the injured person himself, and not either to the state or to the church: nor was the priest to have any share in it at all, except in cases where the priest himself happened to be the person that had suffered the damage. Instances of this we have with regard to the thief that was obliged to restore double to the person whom he had injured, and if the thing he had stolen was sold or destroyed, four or five fold; and if he could not do this, he was to be sold by him whom he had wronged. And in case of a man's accusing a virgin wrongfully, or in case of deflowering a virgin unbetrothed, the law appointed a fine or sum of money to be paid to her father, besides the satisfaction that was to be made to the damsel herself, Deut. xxii. 18, 19, 29. And in these cases, where there were penal mulcts appointed by law, there were no sacrifices admitted: and on the other hand, in cases where sacrifices were prescribed, there was no mulct appointed.

But he farther urges, to show that the making the atonement to consist in the priest's sprinkling the sacrificial blood was 'a gross fallacy and imposition; that the persons entitled to this atonement, were supposed to be guilty of no fault after they had satisfied the law in making their offering, or paying of their fine, which if they had not done no atonement could be accepted. And that this therefore was taking out a pardon after the debt had been paid, and the law satisfied, and owning an infinite obligation to the priests, for

cheating them out of their money, and their substance.' p. 128. The sting of this sneer lies here. That before the blood was sprinkled the law was satisfied, and the person supposed to be guilty of no fault, and therefore it was an imposition to pretend that the sprinkling of the blood made an atonement for him. But this is misrepresented : for the law was not satisfied, nor was the offering properly made or completed, till the blood was sprinkled. Till that was done the person was still supposed to lie under his guilt, and was not clear in the eye of the law. And as the sacrifice could not be of any avail without confession and restitution, which was supposed to be a necessary qualification for forgiveness, so in cases where sacrifices were prescribed, though a man had made restitution, he was not regarded as free from his guilt till the sacrifice was offered, and the atonement made by the blood. Restitution did indeed repair the injury offered to his neighbour, but still there was a guilt cleaving to him on account of the transgression he had been guilty of against God. Expiation therefore was to be made for the offence committed against the divine majesty. And in order to this, the blood of the sacrifice was required to be offered unto God. And the reason that is given why the blood was supposed to make atonement for the soul, is this, that the 'life of the flesh is in the blood,' Lev. xvii. 2. So that the atonement consisted in this, that the life of the victim was given for the offender ; and the sprinkling of the blood upon the altar was an offering or rendering the blood or life of the victim unto God. This was to put them in mind, that in strictness they had deserved death at the hand of God, if he should deal with them in a way of rigorous justice ; since every transgression and disobedience exposed them to the curse that was denounced in the law against 'every one that continued not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them : ' but yet that he would graciously pardon them, and accept an atonement for them ; and accordingly when this was offered, the person that had offended was legally clean and free from the guilt and curse he had contracted and not before.

As to the general reasons of this constitution, it was a visible pledge of God's pardoning mercy to penitent sinners, and at the same time it tended to preserve in their mind a lively sense of his justice and purity, and of the evil of sin, and to make them sensible what it deserved if God should enter into strict judgment with them : since besides repentance and amendment the shedding of the blood of the sacrifice for them was required in order to the expiation of their guilt. And sacrifices were insisted on even with regard to sins of ignorance and inadvertency, that they might be afraid of all sin when they found that the least sin was not to be passed by without some marks of God's displeasure against it, and might be rendered cautious and vigilant over themselves and their own conduct, since even ignorance and inadvertency or rashness, which is the cause of many faults, should not totally excuse for a violation of the law : but when once it came to be known, they were to confess it before God, to humble themselves on the account of it,

and to seek expiation for it by the blood of the sacrifice. Lastly, supposing that God had from the beginning formed the wise and gracious design to send his own Son into the world in the fulness of time to take upon him our nature, and to shed his blood as a propitiation for the sins of the world ; and that this was the way in which he had appointed to confer salvation on guilty mankind ; that so he might declare his righteousness in the remission of sins, and vindicate the authority of his government and laws even in the very methods of reconciliation : taking in this view of things, it was very proper to institute and appoint sacrifices, the better to prepare the world for receiving that method of redemption through the blood and sacrifice of his Son, and to typify and prefigure the true atonement. And upon this state of the case, the propriety of this constitution of sacrifices, and the comprehensive views the divine wisdom had in it, do more fully appear.

Thus it appears, that there were great and wise ends in this institution of sacrifices, and at the same time care was taken that they should be managed so as not at all to interfere with the civil laws, or to be any way detrimental to the society, by derogating from the justice and public order necessary for the preservation of the commonwealth.

CHAPTER VII.

His pretence that the law of Moses made no distinction between morals and rituals, and never urged things as in themselves fit and reasonable ; and that the stories of the miracles recorded there were the cause of the Jews' obduracy and impenitency throughout all their generations. His bitter invectives against the Jews, and the strange representation he makes of that people, with a view to cast a reproach upon their law. It is shown that by the advantage of their law, they far exceeded all other nations in the knowledge of religion, and that they were famed for wisdom even among the Heathens. The proper use that should be made of the accounts given us of their faults, and of the punishments inflicted on them.

WE have not yet done with this writer's objections against the law of Moses, with a view to expose that law and the Jews. He tells us, p. 271, that ' Moses gave them a law, not as a law or religion of nature, but as the immediate voice and positive will of God, the grounds or reasons of which they were never to examine or inquire into, nor to look upon it either as founded in the eternal immutable fitness of things, or the result of any human reason or prudence ; and having this opinion of their law in general, they made no distinction between morals and rituals, between eternal and immutable, and temporary and mutable obligations, or between the laws of nature, and the perfect reverse of them.' And he had ob-

served before, that 'they would believe nothing as necessarily and eternally true in nature and reason, but depended for the proof of every thing upon miracles, prodigies, &c. And that they had really no such thing among them as a notion of what is right and wrong in morality,' p. 256.

It will be easily granted that Moses represents the law he gives as enjoined by the immediate authority and will of God himself. And I suppose none will deny but that this must give a mighty force and efficacy to laws however fit or reasonable in themselves. And I believe every considerate person will allow that in a divine law it is not necessary to enter into the particular reasons of all the commands that are given, or to deduce them by a chain of philosophical reasonings from what this writer calls the eternal fitness of things. But if he means to insinuate, as seems plainly to be his intention, that in the law of Moses things are never urged upon the people as in themselves fit and reasonable, nor the grounds and reasons of the law ever set before them, nothing can be more false, as is evident to any one that is in the least acquainted with that law. They are not urged to obedience from a mere regard to the authority of God who gave them those laws, but they are frequently urged to it from a consideration of his goodness; and the reasonableness and fitness of the thing required of them is often signified in the most expressive and comprehensive manner, with admirable fullness as well as brevity. It were easy to produce a considerable number of instances out of the books of Moses, in which the reasons of the law are clearly set forth along with the laws themselves, and that both with regard to moral and ritual precepts. It is true, that Moses never talks of the 'eternal reason and immutable fitness of things;' nor does the gospel, though it so evidently tends to give us good and excellent notions of pure and refined morality, ever express itself after this manner. And I apprehend this way of expression will scarce be thought necessary for enlightening the understandings of the people in the knowledge of morals; especially in the crude and confused manner in which this author and some others use it. But it is evident that Moses often teaches the people to regard his laws as founded in reason, and righteousness, and equity, and commendable for their wisdom and excellency. Thus Deut. iv. 6, 7, 8. 'What nation is there so great which hath statutes and judgments so righteous, as all this law which I set before you this day? Keep and do them, for this is your wisdom and understanding.' And he there supposes the excellency of their laws to be so manifest, that other nations that should hear and observe them would be ready to say, 'surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.' He frequently tells them that the statutes and commandments which God required them to obey, were for their own good, Deut. xxvi. 24. x. 13. And it is certain in fact, that the greatest and wisest men among the Jews, and indeed the people in general, had a very high opinion of the wisdom, the goodness, the equity, and reasonableness of their laws. So far is it from being true, which this author confidently alleges, that they did not regard

the 'moral law or statutes and judgments delivered by Moses in the name of God, as true and right, in nature and reason.' The noble account given of the law, Psal. xix. 7—12, to which might easily be added many other passages celebrating the righteousness, the purity, the loveliness of the laws enjoined them, sufficiently shows what were the sentiments of all wise and good men among the Jews on this head.

And indeed, this writer himself elsewhere thinks fit to own, that 'the lawgiver himself (Moses) directed the people to the right motive and principle of action, *i.e.* to the inward love of God and their neighbour, as the principal thing that would be regarded in the sight of God,' p. 34. And that 'this was along understood and insisted on during the legal economy as necessary to a state of true religion and virtue, as might be proved by innumerable testimonies out of the law and the prophets. And that even in our Saviour's time, the Jews, from the highest to the lowest, owned the obligation of it, and could not stifle their convictions of it, how much soever they had lost or neglected the practice. Their most learned men, and Christ's greatest enemies, allowed; that to love God above all, and our neighbour as ourselves, was the sum and substance, the end and design of the whole law,' p. 34. And how this is consistent with his asserting that the Jews made no distinction between morals and rituals, and between the 'laws of nature, and the perfect reverse of them;' and that they had no such thing among them as a 'notion of what is right or wrong in morality,' is hard to conceive.

It is with equal justice and consistency that he represents 'the old stories they had among them of their miraculous deliverances and successes at the first institution of their covenant,' as having 'been the chief occasion of their natural blindness, obduracy, and impenitency in all their succeeding generations, and of their depending on continual miracles,' which he calls 'the most dangerous presumption,' and 'the strongest hold of ignorance and error,' pp. 263, 264. At other times he is pleased to ascribe this to what he calls the 'incurable Egyptian temper of that people,' which they at first contracted in Egypt, and could never afterwards shake off; but here he directly charges their impenitency and obstinacy in all succeeding generations on the miraculous things that were done for them to deliver them out of Egypt; so that as he there expresseth it, 'they had no great reason to boast of their deliverance.' But how those 'old stories,' as he calls them, should have an influence to render them ever afterwards obdurate and impenitent, is hard to conceive. The natural tendency of them, when firmly believed, was to fill them with adoring thoughts of the divine power and majesty, and with a thankful sense of their obligations to his goodness, and to engage them to a more diligent and careful obedience to those laws which came to them confirmed with such illustrious attestations. And it is for such purposes as these that they are frequently mentioned by good men of old in their admirable psalms and hymns of praise. But there is nothing in them to encourage

them to expect any extraordinary interpositions in their favour, whilst they continued an impenitent and disobedient people. On the contrary, those 'old stories' of the miracles wrought at the first establishment of their law were also accompanied with an account of God's righteous severity against their ancestors, and the signal punishments he inflicted upon them for their obduracy and impenitency. There was nothing in their whole law that gave them ground to hope for prosperity and happiness, or any marks of the divine favour towards them, but in a way of righteousness and obedience. And on the other hand, it taught them to expect to be distinguished from other nations, with the most remarkable judgments and tokens of the divine displeasure, in case of their persisting in an obstinate course of wickedness and disobedience. Nor was there any thing in their belief of the extraordinary things that were done at their deliverance out of Egypt, that could reasonably induce them, in ordinary cases, 'to neglect natural human means, which God has ordained and established in the course of his providence;' and to depend on all occasions upon 'miracles, immediate interposition, and uninstrumental divine agency;' which is another charge he advances against them. One would think, by his representation, that the whole nation of the Jews in all ages lived in a continual expectation of nothing else but miracles, that they thought not of using any rational human means at all, but expected at all times to have plenty of food though they never ploughed or sowed, and to be victorious over their enemies without taking arms or fighting. But it does not appear from the history of their nation in the Old Testament, that this was all along their temper and expectation. They are often blamed for making flesh their arm, and placing too much of their dependence on the aids of human power, or the methods of a worldly policy, even to the neglect and disobedience of God's commands and law. In their prosperity, when they were in a state of wealth and power, they were too apt to be over confident and secure; and in their adversity, when they did not see probable human means for their deliverance, they were apt to despond, such is the weakness of our nature, and it was a difficult thing to get their minds raised to a steady confidence in the divine power and goodness for restoring and delivering them. And if at any time they were brought by any gracious promise or assurance that was given them in the name of God, to hope that he would deliver them, they did not generally expect it in a way of 'uninstrumental divine agency,' as this writer phraseth it; it did not make their great men and heroes sit still and neglect rational human means, but rather animated and encouraged them to use the best means they could for their own deliverance, in hope that God would bless and give success to their endeavours; as is evident to any one that is at all acquainted with the history of the Old Testament.

We are now got into the author's invectives against the Jews, in which he seems to take an ill-natured satisfaction. It appears from the passages already produced, that he makes a very disad-

vantageous representation of them, as having no notion of right or wrong in morality, and making no distinction between the laws of nature, and the perfect reverse of them. He frequently talks of 'their constitutional natural blindness which they had contracted in Egypt among their fellow-slaves: that this blindness, bigotry, and enthusiasm was the incurable distemper of this wretched people; and that they continued throughout all their generations under the same Egyptian darkness and mental vassalage, and still retained the gross ignorance, strong prejudices, and constitutional character of that priestly enslaved nation. He represents them as having 'lost all inward sincerity and integrity of heart, and all true notions of God, of his natural and moral attributes and perfections, and of his providential government of the world. That they could not distinguish between the effective and permissive will of God, but ascribed every thing equally to God, as ordering, directing, and appointing the greatest moral as well as natural evils. That their superstition was such, that neither the law of nature, nor the common methods of God's providential government could at all affect them. That it is certain that after their going out of Egypt, notwithstanding their extraordinary deliverance, they could scarcely be paralleled by any other nation upon earth, for their gross ignorance, superstition, and moral wickedness, which ran through all their successive generations, till their final dissolution and destruction.' He often talks of their national blindness, obduracy, and impenitency; and finally pronounces that 'the people of Israel at first, and their remains afterwards called Jews, were a most untoward, grossly ignorant, amazing, superstitious, and desperately wicked generation of men;' see pp. 248, 256, &c., 263, 271.

This is some part of the reproach which he pours forth upon that unhappy nation, and which may give us a specimen of the spirit and rhetoric of this writer. Whatever censures have been at any time passed upon the worst of the Jews in their most degenerate times, he applies without distinction to the whole nation at all times from first to last. The sacred writers often reprove the Jews for their faults, and if other nations were to be dealt with as freely and impartially, they would not appear so fair as they now do in the writings of partial and flattering historians. But though this writer, and others, take advantage of the censures passed upon the Jews in Scripture, I do not see how they can consistently blame that people for those faults for which they are there principally reprov'd. If this author be in the right, their unbelief ought to be condemned as a noble instance of free-thinking; and their frequent revoltings from their law were glorious efforts to shake off an intolerable yoke of tyranny and vassalage that was imposed upon them, and to resume their natural liberties. He is pleased highly to commend their idolatrous princes, as acting upon principles of toleration and liberty of conscience, and seems to approve their joining with the neighbouring nations in their idolatrous rites and usages. So that it is not the Jews as idolatrous, and imitating the heathens, that he really designs to find fault with, but the

Jews as adhering to their law, and to the commands there given, and the worship there established; though the better to cover it, he takes advantage of the reproofs given them in Scripture for those things which he himself must think to be no crimes at all. It is their law itself, and their best and greatest men, those that most religiously adhered to that law, that he principally intends to strike at by his slanderous invectives, which he throws about without distinction.

He affects frequently, as some others have done before him, to speak of the Jews as if they had something naturally gross and stupid in them below the rest of the human species, and were, by their natural constitution, or by a kind of fatal necessity doomed to perpetual blindness, superstition, and slavery. He often talks of their natural and constitutional blindness, stupidity, obduracy, &c. And is pleased to represent them as having 'contracted this constitutional natural blindness in Egypt among their fellow-slaves,' p. 248. It was 'natural' and 'constitutional' to them through all their generations, and yet was 'contracted in Egypt.' How this will agree I cannot tell, except it be said that in Egypt they contracted some odd kind of nature and constitution, which, like a distemper, ran in their blood, and was conveyed from father to son through all their successive generations. And then it must be owned they were a 'wretched people' indeed 'from first to last,' but at the same time they were to be pitied more than blamed, and it was rather their calamity than their crime. And this being, as he calls it, the 'incurable distemper of this wretched people,' no wonder he asks, 'What could Moses and the prophets do with them?' for as he wisely observes, 'they could not new-make them,' p. 271. And therefore it was impossible to govern and influence them in their own way. And he tells us, that 'God gave them up to that wickedness and tyranny, under such a dispensation of blindness and slavery, because there was no other way to be taken with them,' p. 248. Where he speaks as if he thought God himself could not help them, or do any thing else with them, but give them up to wickedness and tyranny, blindness and slavery. Though at another time he seems to think, that the people might have been better, if they had been better instructed; and after having observed, that the 'prophets and priests were equally Egyptianized,' he affects to pity the people, who 'had no better means of information,' p. 265.

But when this writer and others have said the worst against the Jews that their malice can suggest; and though he represents them as a nation 'scarce to be paralleled by any other nation upon earth for their gross ignorance,' and as having 'lost all true notions of God, and of his natural and moral attributes and perfections,' yet it is certain that in their knowledge of God and true religion, they vastly exceeded all other nations, even those that were most celebrated for their wisdom and learning, and were the only people that worshipped the one living and true God, when the rest of the world was overrun with idolatry and false worship. And

there is reason to think, that there were numbers among them, even of the common people, that by their acquaintance with their law, which they were all commanded diligently to read and to consider, and in which they were to instruct their children, were brought to form juster and nobler notions of God and of his providence, of the duty they owed him, and the worship that was to be rendered to him, than even the wise men and philosophers among the pagans. And what rendered this more remarkable was, that they came out of Egypt, which, according to this writer, was the 'mistress of idolatry' to other nations. Egypt was a country illustrious among the ancients for riches, arts, and learning. From thence Greece principally derived her knowledge, and thither her most renowned philosophers and wise men travelled for improvement. And yet Sir John Marsham, who is not partial to the Hebrews, justly observes, that it is beyond all doubt, that the Hebrews entertained most just and reverent sentiments of the one true God that governs the world, whereas the opinions of the Egyptians in that respect were very wrong : ' Certè nulla est controversia, quin περὶ μοναρχίας, de unius regimine, sive de Deo unico, reverens fuerit et rectissima Hebræorum, non item recta Ægyptiorum existimatio,' Can. Chron. Sæcul. 9. And surely this was no sign of an extraordinary blindness and ignorance in the Hebrews above other nations.

Their laws, in spite of this author's representation of them, to all candid and impartial judges, discover an admirable wisdom, piety, justice, and purity. Their historians show an unparalleled impartiality, and seem only to have in view the relating plain truth without disguise, and observing the happy effects of righteousness, piety, and virtue upon kings and people, and the great evils and calamities that befel them, when they fell into idolatry and vice. Their writers of religion and morality are admirable and unequalled for the noblest conceptions of the Supreme Being, of his glorious perfections and governing providence ; for exhibiting precepts of pure morals, and maxims of the truest wisdom ; for the most moving and pathetical exhortations to repentance, and to the practice of piety and righteousness, and the most earnest and impartial reprehensions of vice and sin. Their heroes and great men, whose actions are not blazoned out by the pens of flattering historians, but related with a wonderful brevity and simplicity, were equal to the most renowned heroes and great men of any other nation, for the greatness of their exploits, their wisdom and prudence, their bravery and magnanimity, their love to their country, and zeal for its liberties ; but beyond comparison superior to them all for their true piety and profound veneration towards God, and zeal for his pure worship, in opposition to idolatry and superstition. I cannot conceive, therefore, with what justice or decency those gentlemen that so much admire the ancient Greeks and Romans, and can scarce ever speak of the people in general, or of their great men and philosophers in particular without rapture, should on all occasions express such contempt of the Jews, as the most stupid, blind, despicable race of men that ever lived upon the earth : when their

greatest fault for many ages was their falling into the vices and idolatries of the neighbouring nations, and imitating their corrupt customs and manners. And yet we have reason to think, that even in the times of their greatest degeneracy, and their most corrupt state under the Old Testament, there were incomparably more truly religious men, and devout adorers of the Deity among them, than in any other nation under heaven. We find that even in the days of Ahab, when Israel was in its most degenerate state, and the public idolatry at its greatest height among them, there were several thousands who, by the testimony of God himself, persevered in his true worship and obedience, free from idolatry; and no doubt there was a much greater number at that time in Judah. And I believe the most extensive charity can scarce suppose, that there was such a number of true worshippers of God in Greece or Rome in their best times. And the truth is, we have no account of any such; and their best and wisest men did all of them countenance and encourage the public idolatry, by their maxims, and by their practice.

Notwithstanding that the great difference of their customs, and of their religion from the rest of mankind, rendered the Jews very unpopular, yet the heathens themselves could not help sometimes professing their esteem and admiration for them and for their laws, in a manner that showed they were far from looking upon them as such a stupid, senseless, contemptible generation of men as this writer represents them. The judicious Strabo gives a handsome testimony concerning them in his sixteenth book, where he makes the cause of Moses's forsaking Egypt to his being dissatisfied with the false notion and worship of God that had obtained among the Egyptians, and supposes him to have entertained nobler notions of the divinity than the Egyptians, or Lybians, or Greeks. That therefore he went out from Egypt, and along with him many that 'honoured the Deity, πολλοὶ τιμῶντες τὸ θεῖον.' That he 'persuaded many good men,' and brought them into the country where Jerusalem is built; and that there his successors continued for some time 'practising justice or righteousness,' and being 'truly religious, or sincere worshippers of God: δικαιопραγούντες καὶ θεοσεβεῖς ὡς ἀληθῶς ὄντες.' So Justin, out of Trogus Pompeius praises the ancient Jews for their 'justice joined with piety, justitia religione permixta,' Just. lib. 36. Porphyry, cited by Eusebius, Præp. Evang. lib. ix. c. 10; after having observed that the Barbarians had juster notions of religion than the Greeks, produces an oracle from Apollo, which reckons the Hebrews among the nations that found out and knew the way to happiness; and another in which it is pronounced that the 'Chaldeans and Hebrews alone obtained wisdom, purely worshipping God the (eternal) king. And in another oracle there produced the Hebrews are called 'ἀριζήλητοι, illustrious,' or 'worthy to be emulated.' I do not mention these as if any stress was to be laid upon the testimony of Apollo's oracles, but only to show the opinion that had then obtained among the heathens themselves, of the wisdom and religion of the Hebrews: for if their fame

had not been far spread on this account, the oracle would scarce have described them under that character.

There is one part of our author's invectives against the Jews which I cannot pass by without a particular notice. He charges them, among other things, with not being able 'to distinguish between the effective and permissive will of God;' and with 'ascribing every thing equally to God as ordering, directing, and approving the greatest moral as well as natural evils, though brought about by the power and malice of tyrants and wicked men.' I might observe here that the Sadducees, whom he elsewhere represents as 'the true remains of the ancient Jews,' were so far from being of this sentiment, that, according to Josephus's account of them, they scarce allowed providence any thing to do about any human actions, and nothing at all about evil ones. But undoubtedly this writer designs this as a reflection upon the sacred writings, which, though they every where declare God's detestation against sin in the strongest terms, yet represent his most wise and just providence as directing and over-ruling all events; and teach us to regard his sovereign hand in all the evils and calamities that befall us, though immediately inflicted by the agency and influence of wicked men and tyrants; of whose wickedness and injustice he is not the author or cause, but most wisely over-rules it for carrying on the important designs of his government. And must not every one that hath just notions of providence, or of God's presiding over human affairs, acknowledge the same thing? Even this author, who, from a desire of bespattering the Scriptures, would fain cavil at this doctrine, yet frequently expresseth himself in a manner that cannot be vindicated on any other principles. Thus he tells us, p. 244, that the 'Egyptian priests, by an incidency of providence, gained an independency both of the crown and people.' And after having censured the Jews for ascribing those things to the providence of God which were 'brought about by wicked men,' he himself, in the very next sentence, ascribes what, according to his account of it, was a very ill thing to an extraordinary interposition of divine providence. For he tells us, p. 257, that the 'Israelites were delivered from Egypt by an extraordinary providence, and brought off with all their plunder, after having been the plagues of the country for above two hundred years.' And again, p. 260, he represents God as having 'in the course of his providence given the kingdom to David,' though, according to the representation he makes of that matter, p. 299, he came to it by a series of 'falsehoods, perjuries, treason, and rebellion.'

Here it may not be improper to observe the absurdity of this writer when undertaking to give an account of the 'false principles and gross errors which occasioned the wickedness and obstinacy of the Jews,' and in which principles and errors he saith the Egyptian priests and sorcerers had confirmed them,' p. 255, et seq.: he makes the second of those principles and errors to be this: that after having been delivered from Egypt by an 'extraordinary providence,' they from thence took 'it in their heads that they were

the peculiar favourites of heaven by an absolute irreversible decree ; that they should from thenceforth succeed in all their enterprises, and make themselves masters of the whole world,' &c. And the third principle or error he makes to be their ' gross mistake of the nature and design of the Abrahamic covenant, which they took in an absolute sense ; though it was only conditional. Every one sees how absurd it is to suppose that these were among the principles in ' which the Egyptian priests and sorcerers' had confirmed the Israelites. And yet this is what he affirms concerning all these principles and errors in general.

Not to follow him farther in his spiteful reflections upon the Jews, I shall only observe that in his great desire to expose them, he seems willing to allow for a while the miracles of Moses to have been true and real facts, though at other times he represents them all as mere fiction and romance. He observes that ' within three months after their most wonderful deliverance from Egypt, they fell into the Egyptian idolatry. And notwithstanding all the miracles they had seen there, and their miraculous passage through the Red Sea, they made a calf, &c. : and after all the miracles of Egypt, and the awful manner of giving the law, &c., they were just upon the point of making themselves a captain to return thither,' pp. 268, 269. Thus he can own these things to be real facts, or make them all fiction and flourish, just as it suits his present convenience. And whereas he tells us, that ' before they were brought out of Egypt they had been the most grievous and insupportable plagues of an enslaved and ruined country, *i.e.* of Egypt, for above two hundred years,' p. 257. And again, p. 265, that ' Egypt was a country, which, by divine permission, in the course of his providence, they, *i.e.* the Israelites had enslaved and ruined : ' this plainly lets us see how little justice we are to expect from this writer ; since the very contrary is true, that the Israelites had for a succession of years in Egypt before their miraculous deliverance, undergone a series of cruelty and oppression, scarce to be paralleled in history. Hence they are often afterwards put in mind that they had been bondmen in the land of Egypt. And it is called a ' furnace of iron,' and the ' house of bondage.' But our pretended moral philosopher, who would be thought such a friend and advocate for liberty, can stand up for tyranny and oppression, when it is upon the Jews that they are exercised.

I shall conclude my remarks on this writer's invectives against the Jews, with observing that it were greatly to be wished that those that are most forward to reproach that unhappy people, would be careful not to imitate them in some of the worst parts of their conduct and character : such as their sinning against great advantages put into their hands for knowing and practising their duty ; the general corruption of manners they fell into in the last times of their state ; their rejecting the many calls and warnings that were given them from time to time ; and lastly, which completed their guilt, their obstinate unbelief in rejecting the Saviour Jesus Christ, and the revelation he brought to them, though attended with the

most convincing and illustrious attestations. These things at length brought a terrible destruction upon them. And it becomes us 'not to be high-minded but fear,' as the apostle Paul advises on this occasion. A conduct like theirs, when once it becomes general among any people, is the surest way to expose them to God's heavy displeasure, and to the most grievous calamities. I cannot but think the natural tendency of the attempts made by this writer, and others of his spirit, is to bring us into this condition; but I hope God will, in his infinite mercy, make their endeavours as vain and ineffectual, as they are wicked and unreasonable.

CHAPTER VIII.

A transition to the author's objections against other parts of the Old Testament. Concerning the two different turns or distinct popular appearances which he pretends the Spirit of Prophecy took in Israel. And first concerning the Urim and Thummim. His account of the original and design of that oracle considered. The attempt he makes to destroy the credit of it, because of the part it had in the war against the Benjamites for the injury done to the Levite and his concubine at Gibeah. That whole transaction particularly considered. His account of the ceasing of that oracle, and the reasons he assigns for it examined. The order of prophets, by his own confession a wise and excellent institution. The strange inconsistent representation he gives of their character and conduct. The way he takes to account for their foretelling future events, shown to be insufficient. Their predictions not merely general and ambiguous, but clear, express, and circumstantial. The difference between the false prophets and the true, considered. No argument to be drawn from the former to the disadvantage of the latter.

HAVING considered this writer's objections against the law of Moses, our way is clear to proceed to what he hath advanced in his book against other parts of the Old Testament. He sets himself with all his might to ridicule and expose the spirit of prophecy under that dispensation. He undertakes to prove, pp. 265, 267, that 'the prophets were not infallible, and that they never believed themselves to be so, but were under a necessity to talk as they did,' that is, as he had expressed it just before, 'to talk in the miraculous supernatural way, and make themselves the infallible oracles of God to the people:' though they knew well enough, that they were not immediately inspired by God, and that he had not sent them at all. And he thinks, or pretends to think, they were not blameable for this. It was only the effect of human prudence. They might 'falsify and deceive without injury, and secure their own private interest for the public good.' And he intimates that

'a wise and good man' may do so, and that 'till a man knows the secret of doing this, he knows nothing of human nature, or human life,' pp. 266, 267. Thus I find it is a maxim with our moral philosopher, *si populus vult decipi, decipiatur*; and that upon occasion, he could himself act the prophet, and pretend immediate inspiration and revelations from God, if he thought it would answer his end with the people. But the ancient prophets were of a very different spirit, and governed themselves by quite different maxims and principles.

But let us see what proof he brings to show that they were neither extraordinarily inspired by God, nor believed themselves to be so. And first he begins with observing, that 'the spirit of prophecy in Israel, or the spirit of infallibly declaring the mind and will of God, took two different turns or distinct popular appearances.' From the days of Moses to Samuel, the oracle of Urim and Thummim was established as the last resort in judgment, and then it fell into disgrace, and Samuel instituted the order of prophets.

And first he begs leave to give a 'brief history of the first and grand device,' as he calls it, 'the oracle of Urim and Thummim,' p. 267, &c. He insinuates, that the original of it is to be ascribed to the people's having been 'much amused and surprised with the infallible declarations and decisions of Jupiter Hammon; and then after running out for three or four pages together into his common place of invectives against the Jews, he observes, p. 272, that 'it is absolutely necessary to the ends of government, that in every society there shall be some dernier resort, or ultimate appeal in judgment. And this last and ultimate appeal in Israel, by the establishment of Moses, was to the oracle of Urim and Thummin. And this last decision was made by the high-priest as by a living oracle, who gave his answer, *viva voce*, while he sat with the Urim and Thummin in judgment. And while he wore this sitting in judgment, it was presumed that he was both infallible and impeccable, or that his voice and decision was the undoubted organized voice of God. But the voice of this oracle was soon found to be the voice of the priest,' p. 268. And then he proceeds to what he calls a 'remarkable proof that this oracle was neither infallible nor impeccable,' p. 273.

As to his insinuation about the oracle of Jupiter Hammon, he shows his inclination to draw a parallel between the pagan oracles and the spirit of prophecy under the Old Testament dispensation; but he offers no proof for it, and we shall hardly think his own word a sufficient authority. And what he there observes concerning the 'doubtfulness and ambiguity of the oracular declarations, which always gave them room enough for an evasion; and that the oracle was never particular enough to be tied down to time and circumstance,' p. 268, is no way applicable to the many particular express and circumstantial predictions under the Old Testament. Particularly with regard to the oracle of Urim and Thummin; it is a just observation of the learned Dr. Prideaux, that 'the name of Urim and Thummin, that is, light and perfection (though this

author shows his skill in the original by rendering it truth and righteousness) were given only to denote the clearness and perfection which these oracular answers always carried with them; for these answers were not like the heathen oracles, enigmatical and ambiguous; but always clear and manifest; not such as did ever fall short of perfection, either of fulness in the answer, or certainty in the truth of it.' See *Prid. Connect.* part I. book 3. And it is certain that the answers of this oracle recorded in Scripture are clear, explicit, and direct to the questions propounded to it.

When our author represents the oracle of Urim and Thummim, as appointed to be 'the last resort in judgment,' to which, by Moses's establishment, the 'ultimate appeal in Israel was to be made; and describes the high priest as sitting with the Urim and Thummin in judgment,' and making 'the last decision;' as if in judicial causes the last resort or appeal lay to this oracle; this is a gross misrepresentation, either through ignorance or design. The Urim and Thummin was not established for deciding causes in judgment, which were decided in another method; but for asking counsel of God, and that not in private affairs, but in affairs relating to the public, to the king, or some chief governor, or the whole people of Israel. Thus Moses saith concerning Joshua (and the Jews very justly interpret it as extending to the succeeding governors) that 'he shall stand before Eleazar the priest, who shall ask counsel for him, after the judgment of Urim before the Lord: at his word shall they go out, and at his word shall they come in, both he and all the children of Israel with him, even all the congregation,' *Numb.* xxxvii. 21. Where by their 'going out,' and 'coming in,' the Jews understand particularly, the making war according to the import of that phrase in the Scripture language. And this was well suited to the nature of their government as a theocracy. As God had condescended to enter into a special relation to them, as in a peculiar sense their king and governor, so he not only from time to time raised up extraordinary persons to judge and govern them, the appointing of which he reserved to himself out of what tribe he pleased; but by the oracle of Urim and Thummim, he directed how they were to proceed in their most important public affairs. This was an act of great goodness and condescension in God, and an inestimable privilege to the Israelites, the advantage of which they would have enjoyed if they had persisted in their obedience, and kept the covenant.* They would, in that case, never have wanted his gracious direction as far as was necessary to their security and support. Thus it pleased God to indulge that advantage to his chosen people in reality, to which the heathens vainly pretended by their oracles. As to the particular manner in

* It did not depend on the high-priest to give answers by the Urim and Thummim whenever he pleased; it depended wholly on the will of God, who might, in token of his just displeasure against them for their sins, see fit to withhold his direction by this oracle, either from the chief rulers or the people, though they applied to him for that purpose. An instance of which we have in Saul, who could obtain no answer from God by Urim, though he earnestly desired it.

which this oracle was delivered, I shall not enter into a disquisition, which hath sufficiently employed the learned: the reader may see a short and judicious account of it in Dr. Prideaux in the place above cited.

But however that be, this writer pronounces, 'that it is certain, this oracle was neither infallible nor impeccable:' of which he tells us a 'remarkable proof happened under the high priesthood of Phineas, the grandson of Aaron.' And then he goes on to tell the story after his own way concerning the injury done to the Levite and his concubine at Gibeah; upon which 'the whole tribe of Benjamin, by the decision of the oracle, was doomed to destruction:' and 'that this was done without the least truth, natural honour, or common justice, is evident from the story itself.' And after having represented the fact in such a manner as he thought would best answer his design, he observes, that 'nothing was done in this whole affair but under the counsel and direction of Phineas, the high priest, who was then the living oracle of God in Israel.' And that this makes it 'evident that the oracle was neither infallible nor impeccable: so far from it, that he encouraged and prompted the people to the most bloody and cruel outrage, that had ever been known or heard of: and an injury done to a single Levite was thought fit to be revenged by cutting off a whole tribe, root and branch, without any regard to natural justice, or the least bowels of mercy and compassion. And that from this time the oracle fell into disgrace, and we hear no more of it for above three hundred years,' see pp. 273—281. This story serves the author for more purposes than one. As he produces it here to destroy the credit of the oracle of Urim and Thummim; so he had mentioned it before, pp. 140, 141, as containing a plain proof that 'Levi was a tribe exempted from the jurisdiction of the law, and protected against it: and that there was no law for priests and Levites at that time.' Where also he represents that 'whole transaction as a scene of wickedness, injustice, and priestcraft.'

I shall particularly examine the author's account of this matter, by which it will appear how little he is to be trusted in his accounts of things, who can allow himself such a scope in misrepresentation in a story so well known. He discovers from first to last not a disposition to find out the truth, or represent the fact fairly as it was, but a most violent inclination, first, to make it look as black as possible, and then to lay the whole blame of it upon the oracle. And where he does not find the story for his purpose, to make it so.

The poor injured Levite has incurred his displeasure; for what reason I know not, except because he was a Levite. He calls him once and again the 'drunken Levite,' p. 141, and p. 280, though there is not word of his drunkenness in the whole story. He insinuates indeed, that the Levite got drunk at his father-in-law's, particularly the day he came away. His father-in-law desired him to stay and 'comfort his heart:' but it happens that the text only tells that they 'tarried till noon, and did eat both of them,' Judg. xix. 8. If it had been said, they drank both of them, it might

have passed with this author for a strong proof, though I believe it will be allowed that people may drink together without being drunk. He observes also that we are told, that the Levite and the old Ephraimite that entertained him at his house, 'cheered their hearts, and made merry together,' as if he thought it impossible for persons to cheer their hearts, and to refresh and entertain themselves and their friends without being drunk. But these things are easily distinguishable in themselves, whatever they are to this author. Another proof of his good will to the Levite, is his calling his concubine 'his whore;' though every body that is at all versed in these matters, knows that a concubine was a real wife, but without a dowry. And in the present case, the Levite is several times called her husband, and her father is called his father-in-law: and this the author very well knew, for in relating the story he calls them so himself. And yet he has it over and over again, 'a certain Levite with his eloped concubine or whore; the Levite's concubine or rather whore; a drunken Levite and his whore,' pp. 273, 276, 278, 280.

As to the Levite's wife or concubine, he saith, p. 275, that it 'is plain from the story itself, that before her elopement she had been a common whore.' It appears indeed from the story according to our translation, Judg. xix. 2, that she had proved unfaithful to his bed, but nothing is said to fix upon her the character of a 'common whore.' This is supplied by the author's own imagination. But the word which our translators render 'she played the whore against him,' is in the Septuagint rendered, ἐπορεύθη ἀπ' αὐτοῦ, 'she went away from him, or forsook him; and some copies have it, ὠργίσθη αὐτῷ, she was angry at him. And Grotius observes that the Hebrew word there made use of, which properly signifies to play the whore, may also be used to signify an alienation of mind or affection. Jonathan cited by Vatablus has it, *cum sprevisset eum*; and to the same purpose Kimchi cited by Lud. De Dieu, *desperxit eum*; she despised him. And some judicious commentators conclude from the readiness he showed to be reconciled, and his 'speaking soft comfortable words to her,' or as the Hebrew phrase is, 'speaking to her heart,' ver. 3, that she was not guilty of adultery. For then it is probable he would not have so solicitously sought for a reconciliation, nor would it have been lawful for him to do so. And indeed, her going to her father's house (for it does not appear that she was turned out, but that she went away of herself) and continuing there four months, looks more like a family quarrel upon some other account, than like the act of a common whore, who in all probability would have shunned her father's house as well as her husband's; and could not well have expected a refuge or entertainment there. Another attempt our author makes to disguise the story is, that he would fain insinuate, that the Levite and his concubine had raised the mob of Gibeah against them by their ill and lewd behaviour. 'How this drunken Levite and his whore behaved themselves, with what decency and civility on their coming into the city, is not said: but this is plain, that they had raised a

mob about them, which had like to have done more mischief,' p. 280. And he had said the same thing before, p. 275, and again, p. 281, that 'the historian knew very well that this affair would not bear a particular relation, as to the occasion and circumstances which made such an uproar in Gibeah; though from what he hath said, one may easily guess at the true grounds of this popular outrage.' What the author has particularly in view in these insinuations I will not pretend to guess, but one thing is plain, that he has a strong inclination to lay the blame rather on the Levite that suffered the injury, than on those that inflicted it. Of any ill behaviour of the Levite upon his coming into Gibeah, there is not the least hint in the whole story. The good old Ephraimite returning from the field at even found the Levite and his concubine in the street alone, no mob about them, and nobody taking notice of them, and therefore in compassion took these strangers to his own house, being not willing that they should continue in the street all night, as knowing no doubt the wickedness of the place. Our author next is pleased to observe that a 'violent outraging mob in the middle of the night beset the house,' &c. He will have it to be done 'in the middle of the night, with an intent, I suppose to insinuate, that the Levite and his host, who were then refreshing themselves, sat up drinking and carousing till midnight: but of this there is not one word in the story. It may rather be concluded from it, that this happened not long after the Levite had got into the old man's house, which was in the evening. When they had 'given provender to their asses,' and had 'washed their feet,' and were 'eating, and drinking and cheering their hearts, behold the men of the city, certain sons of Belial, beset the house round about, and beat at the door, and spake to the master of the house, the old man, saying, Bring forth the man that came into thine house, that we may know him,' Judg. xix. 21, 22. The very same words that the men of Sodom used to signify their detestable design to abuse the angels whom they took to be men, Gen. xix. 5. Here it is plain that they did not want to have the Levite brought out to them for any rudeness or uncivil behaviour he had been guilty of, but to gratify their horrid and unnatural lusts. And indeed, Gibeah seems to have been then like Sodom, both in inhospitality and unnatural impurities. It was with difficulty the Levite himself escaped, and probably upon his withstanding them it was that they threatened to kill him, as he informs the Israelites, Judg. xx. 5. But he was forced to give up his concubine to their lusts, whom by this author's own acknowledgment 'they forced and ravished to death.' But instead of showing a just detestation of so execrable a crime, he expresses himself on this occasion in a manner that cannot but be shocking to a chaste ear, and which I shall not repeat.

There was then no judge or supreme magistrate in Israel to whom the Levite might apply for redress, and for the punishment of so enormous an outrage. And therefore he took an extraordinary method to raise an indignation in the people, and engage

them to do him justice. He divided the dead body of his concubine into twelve parts, and sent them to the twelve tribes of Israel, and consequently to the tribe of Benjamin among the rest; which he concluded would make a deeper impression upon them, than the bare relation of the story would have done. The resentment the people generally showed of so horrid a wickedness, and their behaviour on this occasion, seems to me to furnish a plain proof that there was still among them a great deal of national virtue. We are told, that all that saw it said, 'there was no such deed done nor seen from the days that the children of Israel came up out of the land of Egypt unto this day: consider of it, take advice, and speak your minds.' Their being so strangely shocked at the enormousness of the crime, and declaring that no such thing had been heard of among them before, showed that they had been hitherto generally strangers to such horrid acts of wickedness, violence, and impurity; for which the Canaanites that had lived in the country before them had been particularly remarkable. It may be gathered from the account that is given us, that they first considered it in their several tribes, the chief men of each tribe among themselves, and then there was a general assembly of all the people at Mizpeh. How long it was after the fact before this assembly was held, we are not told, or how, and by what methods it was convened; but undoubtedly by a common concert among the several tribes it was agreed that the whole body of the people should meet on this occasion. And then it was that a solemn curse was denounced, devoting those to death by a general consent that should not come. For though each tribe had a government in itself, yet all the tribes made up one body, and they were all subject to the authority of the whole, or general assembly of the nation. When they were all met together, they were far from acting with such precipitation as this writer represents it. They proceeded in the most orderly method. They first inquired into the fact itself. 'Tell us,' say they, 'how was this wickedness?' The word in the original *תִּבְרַרְנוּ* tell ye us, shows that they directed their speech to more than one. Probably the Levite and his servant whom he had with him at Gibeah, and the old Ephraimite that entertained him were present at the assembly. And though the Levite only is mentioned as relating the fact, which no doubt he did at large in all its circumstances, they were there to confirm and attest the truth of it. This writer indeed takes upon him to affirm, that the 'Levite's account was taken without any farther inquiry. What farther inquiry could be made? The tribe of Benjamin had notice given them of the fact in the same way that all the other tribes knew it, and were summoned to come as well as the other tribes, to the general assembly of the nation. If the story had been false, why did they not appear to confront it, and to justify themselves, or excuse their countrymen? For we are expressly told, that 'the children of Benjamin heard, that the children of Israel were gone up to Mizpeh,' chap. xx. 3. They knew it and yet would not come; which showed little love to justice, or disposition to peace, and was a high

contempt of the national authority, and a breaking off from that body of which they were a part. But the assembly though they had great reason to be offended at such a conduct, did not as this author represents it, 'immediately resolve upon the destruction of the whole tribe.' After they had a full information of the fact which they carefully inquired into, all the resolution they took upon it was to punish the inhabitants of Gibeah, i. e. the immediate authors of this execrable wickedness, 'according to the folly of wickedness they had wrought in Israel,' ver. 9, 10, 11. And then again, after this, we are told, 'that the tribes of Israel, (i. e. the whole assembly of the nation which were then gathered and knit together as one man, as it is there expressed) sent men through all the tribe of Benjamin, saying, What wickedness is this that is done among you? now therefore deliver us the men, the children of Belial which are in Gibeah, that we may put them to death, and put away evil from Israel,' ver. 12, 13. All that they desired was, that they would give up those persons to justice that had perpetrated this horrid wickedness. And could any message be more reasonable, or more conformable to the rules of justice and equity than this? With this message 'they sent men,' and no doubt persons of note, through all the tribe of Benjamin, to all their cities, and to the chief heads of families amongst them, as some very justly understand it, who were to expostulate with them, and use their utmost persuasions to engage them to comply with so reasonable a demand. But what reception they met with appears from ver. 13. 'But the children of Benjamin would not hearken to the voice of their brethren the children of Israel.' This writer indeed is pleased to tell us, what the Benjamites said to justify or excuse themselves, of which there is not one word in the whole story. 'They refused to deliver up any of their citizens, as nothing could be charged upon any particular persons.' p. 277. And again, p. 280. 'When the whole mob of a town was up in the middle of the night' (though as I have already shown it is probable they first beset the house, and began the outrage in the evening) it must have been impossible to have charged any mischief done upon particular persons, or that the magistrates of Gibeah should give up the rioters demanded by the other tribes, and by the high priest: though of the high priest's demanding them there is not the least account. But why then did not the Benjamites come as well as the rest of the tribes to the general assembly of the nation to represent this, who they knew where met together to inquire into it? Why did not they show a disposition to give them up if they could be found, and to use their best diligence to find them out and punish them? This no doubt, would have satisfied their brethren, who sufficiently showed how willing they were to accept satisfaction in a fair way, and how loth to break with them. But the truth is, there is reason to think they knew well enough who the guilty persons were: in such a town as Gibeah, that was not very large, it was no hard matter to discover who were the principal persons concerned in this outrage, and the old Ephraimite who

lived there, and was well acquainted with the town, and who went out to them, and spoke with them, must be supposed to have known several of them; and therefore was well able to give information about this. It was not therefore that they did not know who they were; but though they knew them well enough, they refused to deliver them up to justice; and thereby became accessaries to their crime, and involved themselves in the guilt and punishment of it. For the refusal of so just a demand, was a sufficient ground for war against them; concerning which see Grot. de Jure belli & pacis, lib. 2, cap. 21. sec. 1, 2, 3, 4. But this was not all; it doth not appear that the Israelites still had any thing farther in view than to punish the inhabitants of Gibeah. We only find that they encamped against Gibeah to fight against it, but not that they had determined to destroy the rest of the tribe of Benjamin. All that they did, when provoked by their evil conduct, was to take a solemn oath, that 'none of them would give their daughters to Benjamin to wife,' see chap. xxi. 1, 7. Which plainly shows that they had then no intention of utterly destroying that tribe, but only to show their abhorrence of their wickedness, by breaking off correspondence with them, and regarding them as not of their society, or belonging to their body, from which indeed they had cut themselves off by their conduct. But what brought destruction upon the Benjamites was this, that they not only refused to 'hearken to the voice of their brethren the children of Israel,' in giving up the criminals when justly demanded, but as it follows, 'they gathered themselves together out of the cities unto Gibeah, to go out to battle against the children of Israel,' ver. 14. Thus in a base and scandalous cause for the sake of some wicked criminals they entered into a most unjust war against the body of their own nation, which in the event brought upon them a severe vengeance. Hitherto we hear nothing of the oracle's being consulted. But now the war being resolved upon, the 'Israelites asked counsel of God,' not whether they should go to war at all, for they seem to have thought the justice of the war so clear, that they had not the least doubt concerning it, but which of the 'tribes should go up first,' or have the chief command in the war, they being upon an equality, and no judge or general with a supreme authority over the whole. Nor did they inquire whether they were to have success in it, for upon this it is likely they confidently presumed, both because of their numbers and power, and because of the justice of their cause. But when the event did not answer their expectations they consulted the oracle again, which the third time promised them success, which it had not done before. And this is all the concern the oracle had in this war. Nor is there the least hint of their consulting it any more in the whole story. As to the slaughter that followed upon it, after the Israelites had been twice defeated, no doubt their passions were raised to the height, partly by their indignation against the wickedness that had been committed, and against the Benjamites for rejecting all the friendly offers that had been made to them, and partly by the great loss and

slaughter they had sustained in the two first engagements ; and then they gave too great a loose to their rage and resentment, in utterly destroying all the cities of Benjamin with the men, women, &c. The author takes upon him to affirm, p. 273, ' that the whole tribe of Benjamin was by the decision of the oracle doomed to destruction.' But this is his own fiction without any thing in the story to support it. There seems to have been no resolution of this kind taken before. And the oath which they took with regard to Benjamin, and which they mentioned before, plainly implies the contrary. It all appears to have been done at once in the heat of blood and passion, without consulting the oracle, or giving themselves time to cool and to consider things. And accordingly, they were sensible of it themselves, and deeply concerned for it when the rage was over. This writer would fain insinuate, that they laid the blame of what they had done upon the oracle itself ; nothing of which appears, but rather that they repented of their own rashness, chap. xxi. 6. And we find ' the elders of the congregation' as they are called, ver. 16, who are the same that are called, chap. xx. 2, ' The chief of all the people, even of all the tribes of Israel,' plainly charged it upon themselves, when they said to the parents of the virgins of Shiloh, whom the Benjamites were suffered to take away, ' be favourable unto them for our sakes ; because we reserved not to every man his wife in the war,' ver. 20, that is, because we rashly carried the slaughter so far, as not to leave the women of the tribe to be wives to the men that should remain.

As to the slaughter of the inhabitants of Jabesh Gilead, this is expressly ascribed, not to the advice of the oracle, but to the congregation, or to the people themselves, probably the heads of them, who sent twelve thousand men to destroy it, chap. xxi. 5, 8, 10. This writer seems to think the inhabitants of Jabesh were much to be commended for not ' having involved themselves in the same difficulties' with the rest of the Israelites, or been any ways concerned in this most unrighteous effusion of blood.' But since they had received the summons that was sent through all Israel, and undoubtedly knew of the oath or curse that had been made in the general assembly of the nation, devoting those to death that should not come, their refusing to come to the general consult, and to submit to the appointment, especially in a just cause, was a very great crime, and a rebellion against the authority of the whole community ; and they thereby were the authors of their own destruction, which in that case they had reason to expect. But if the punishment inflicted upon them was carried too far, as undoubtedly it was, whatever there was wrong or cruel in this proceeding, could not be charged upon the oracle, which was not consulted at all about it. Nor had the oracle any thing to do in the contrivance of suffering the Benjamite young men to take the virgins at Shiloh. This is expressly ascribed to the ' elders of the congregation,' or chief of the people, chap. xxi. 16, 19, 20, who having a great reverence for an oath, thought of this expedient to provide wives for the Benjamites, and yet not violate the oath they had taken,

though it was a rash one. I shall not undertake to vindicate their casuistry in this, though a very great man, Grotius, thinks their conduct in it was very justifiable, and that thereby they saved themselves from the guilt of perjury. See Grot. de Jure belli et pacis, lib. 2, cap. 13, sec. 5.

Our author observes, 'that the Hebrew historian was so conscious of the moral iniquity and wickedness of all this that he concludes the story with these remarkable words, 'in those days there was no king in Israel but every man did that which was right in his own eyes.' The design of these words is to signify, that there was then no chief governor that had a supreme authority over the people. And therefore it is usually and justly thought to have happened in the interval between the death of Joshua, and the elders that survived him, and the appointment of judges, the first of whom was Othniel. And therefore no wonder that there were great crimes committed, and great irregularities in the management of their affairs, and particularly of this affair, since there was no one that had sufficient power to punish delinquents, or to govern the people and restrain their fury, or to guide and conduct them with a proper authority. But then this writer adds, that 'he [the historian] seems to have forgotten what he had just before told us, that there was a high priest in Israel at that time, as the living oracle of God, &c., and that nothing had been done in this whole affair, but under his council and direction.' But this is not to be charged on the historian's forgetfulness or design. Though there was a high priest, yet he was not a king or judge with supreme authority to govern the nation, nor had he the power of the sword, to punish delinquents, or correct abuses. Nor doth it appear by any one thing in the whole course of the story, that the high priest then had, or exercised any authority or sovereign power over the people. This is expressly attributed to 'the chief of the people,' or 'heads of the tribes, and elders of the congregation.' And all that the high priest had to do in it, was only to give them answers when they consulted the oracle of God, which it doth not appear they did after the last battle. And therefore none of the wrong things they did after this are chargeable upon the oracle. Nor is there any evidence to show, that they consulted it with regard to any one part of their conduct, which was really culpable. So far is it from being true, 'that nothing had been done in this whole affair, without the high priest's direction and advice.'

Thus have I particularly considered this affair, on which this writer lays so mighty a stress, and which is the only thing he produces to destroy the 'credit of the oracle of Urim and Thummim.' As to what he adds, p. 281, that 'from that time the oracle fell into disgrace, since we hear no more of it for above three hundred years, or till the days of David: it does not follow that it was not consulted, because we have no particular account of it in the short history that is given us of the judges. And David's consulting it, which our author owns he did 'three or four times, while he was under his difficulties and distresses, (and he might have mentioned Saul

too, who consulted it, as appears from 1 Sam. xiv. 18, 19, 36, 37 ; xxviii. 6) plainly shows, that the reputation of it was not then sunk ; and makes it very probable that it had not lain neglected for above three hundred years. And whereas he tells us, that 'when David came to be settled in the kingdom, we hear no more of it, nor do we find it ever mentioned, consulted, or regarded after,' we are expressly told twice in one chapter, that after David was fully settled in his kingdom, he inquired of the Lord when he was at war with the Philistines, 2 Sam. v. 19, 23, 24. See another instance of it, 2 Sam. xxi. 1.

Our author, after having put the disgrace of the oracle upon the business at Jabesh, afterwards tells us, 'that it is plain from the history itself, that the credit of this oracle sunk and declined with the reputation of the priests, who had fallen into a state of the grossest ignorance and vice ; and by their scandalous behaviour in the days of Eli and Samuel, were perfectly scorned and despised by the meanest of the people.' The history indeed informs us of the scandalous behaviour of Eli's sons, but gives us no account of the corruption of the priests in general, or if it were so, this did not affect the reputation of the 'oracle of Urim and Thummim,' since it is certain from the instances already mentioned, that after the time he assigns for that general corruption of the priesthood, this oracle was still held in great esteem, and was consulted by David, both before he came to the throne and afterwards. Nor is there any proof that the priests were, from the time he mentions, more sunk in their reputation than before : on the contrary, it might be shown from several instances, that both in the reign of David, and under some of the best succeeding kings, that order was as much esteemed as ever it had been. So that if the oracle ceased at that time, it could not be owing to the cause he assigns for it. Some, as the learned Dr. Spencer, who suppose it to have ceased from the time of Solomon, assign very different reasons for it.* But it seems to me more probable, that it continued till the time of the Babylonish captivity. It is true, we have no particular account of its being consulted under the kings, any more than that it was consulted under the judges ; but very probably it was consulted under both : though in the time of the kings, there being a constant succession of inspired prophets made applications to it less frequent, and less necessary. That passage, Ezra ii. 63, and Neh. vii. 65, where the Tirshatha or Governor, determined that the priests that had lost the register of their genealogies, 'should not eat of the most holy things, till there stood up a priest with Urim and Thummim ; as it shows, that at the time of their return from the Babylonish captivity there was no Urim and Thummim, so it seems plainly to intimate that before that captivity under the first temple, there had been a priest with Urim and Thummim, and that they were in hopes it would be so again. But we never hear of it afterwards, though it is certain the priesthood was never

* See Spencer. Dissert. de Urim et Thum. cap. 7.

in greater power and reputation than under the second temple; which shows that that oracle did not rise or fall, with the reputation of the priesthood, nor had any dependence upon it.

Our author, after making this representation of the oracle of Urim and Thummim, proceeds to give an account of the institution of the order of prophets, which he makes to be the 'second different turn, or distinct popular appearance,' which the spirit of prophecy took in Israel. And he represents this as a new institution set up by Samuel. If he intends by this to insinuate that there were no prophets before, it is a great mistake, as appears from several instances mentioned in Scripture, see Gen. xx. 7; Numb. xi. 25, 26; Judg. vi. 8; 1 Sam. ii. 27—36. And Moses, the most eminent of all the prophets, Numb. xii. 6, 7, 8; Deut. xxxiv. 10, was long before that time. But I will grant that from the time of Samuel there seems to have been a more constant succession of prophets than there was before. At what time there were colleges, as this author calls them, of prophets first erected, we are not informed in the sacred writings; but have reason to think that there were some such things in the days of Samuel, and under his special inspection. Thus we read of a 'company of prophets prophesying together,' and 'Samuel standing as appointed over them,' 1 Sam. xix. 20, and of another company of prophets before this, 2 Sam. x. 5. It is very probable that there were places where they lived together in society, and devoted themselves to religious exercises; and that these were in the nature of seminaries, where persons were trained up under the direction of one or more eminent prophet or prophets strictly so called, in the knowledge of the law, and in just and worthy notions of religion and of the Supreme Being; such as every where appear in the prophetic writings; and were employed in solemn acts of adoration to God, particularly in prayer and praise; or composing and singing sacred hymns to his honour. This was so usual and constant a part of their exercise, that praising God is often honoured with the name of prophesying, even where no special inspiration is intended. Thus we read of the Levites being appointed by David to 'prophesy with the harp, with psalteries and cymbals,' 1 Chron. xxv. 1—6. It is probable that the persons who were educated, and who lived together in those prophetic colleges, were usually called prophets, even though they were not immediately and extraordinarily inspired; and because Jezebel was for utterly exterminating these schools of the prophets, which helped to keep up and spread the knowledge of religion, and the true worship of God,* and endeavoured to destroy all that were to be found in those sacred seminaries, she is represented as destroying the 'prophets of the Lord,' of whom Obadiah concealed a hundred. These are probably the same per-

* That the people were wont at stated times to have recourse to the prophets for instruction in religion, especially on the Sabbaths and new moons, may be probably gathered from what the Shunamite's husband said to her, when she wanted to go to the 'man of God; wherefore wilt thou go to him to day? it is neither new moon, nor Sabbath.' 2 Kings iv. 23.

sons that at other times are called the 'sons of the prophets,' and thereby distinguished from the prophets eminently so called, to whom they ministered, and under whose discipline and instructions they were educated. And though many of these never became prophets in the most strict and eminent sense, yet as they addicted themselves to meditation and prayer, to a devout singing praises to God, and to the study of the law under the prophets' direction, so they were thereby well qualified to be useful to the people. And it may very justly be supposed that out of souls thus prepared and disposed God often chose persons whom it pleased him to honour with his sacred immediate inspiration. Thus 1 Kings xx. we read of one who is called a prophet. ver. 38, and one of the prophets, ver. 41, and in ver. 35, the same person is called a 'certain man of the sons of the prophets,' to show that he belonged to one of the prophetic colleges, and had his education there. But that it might not be thought that the prophetic spirit was merely the effect of their being educated in those seminaries, it pleased God to call some to the office of prophets, and to grant them his extraordinary inspiration, who never were educated in those schools at all. Such was the prophet Amos; Amos vii. 14, 15, and probably that eminent prophet Elisha; as may be gathered from 1 Kings xix. 20, 21, and perhaps Elijah himself, and several others of the prophets.

God's raising up such prophets among the Jews from time to time, is frequently mentioned as an extraordinary instance of his goodness and condescension towards that people. See 2 Kings xvii. 18. 2 Chron. xxxvi. 15, 16, Jer. vii. 25. xxv. 4, 5, 6. From which passages it appeareth that they were sent in the name of God to instruct the people in true religion, to warn them against idolatry and other wickedness, and to call them to repentance, and give them the most warm and lively exhortations to the practice of universal righteousness; and how well they performed this, we have a manifest proof from their admirable writings still extant. They were also frequently inspired to foretel future events. and this was ordered for wise and valuable ends. The heathens boasted of their oracles; they had many arts of divination among them, and persons that pretended to the knowledge of future events by communication with their gods, which not a little contribute to keep up the reputation of the spreading idolatry. All these arts of divination were expressly forbidden to the Jews in their law, Deut. xvii. 10, 11, 12. But it pleased God in his great goodness and condescension to raise up prophets among them, who were enabled to foretel future events which it was impossible for any human sagacity to foresee, and that in such a manner as exhibited a glorious triumph over all the heathen idols and their worshippers in that which they vainly pretended to; and thereby manifestly contributed to the main design of the law, which was to preserve the people from idolatry, and from running after the vanities of the heathens. Some of the prophetic predictions related to things which were to happen in their own time, whether of a private or of a more public nature: the exact accomplishment of which tended to engage

the people to pay a greater regard to their pure and excellent instructions and exhortations. Others of their predictions related to things that were to happen in future ages at a considerable distance of time, and the fulfilling of these from time to time in their proper season, gave a still farther proof that they were extraordinarily inspired of God. But especially many of their predictions looked forward to the great Messiah or Saviour of mankind, and to the dispensation he was to introduce. For the prophets themselves were not sent to bring in any new dispensation, or to teach and publish any new doctrines or laws; but their mission was evidently appointed with a double view; the one towards the law of Moses which had been already given, and the authority of which the prophets did farther confirm and establish, and endeavoured to keep the people to the observation of it whilst it continued in force; the other view was towards the future dispensation of the Messiah, whose coming kingdom, covenant, offices, and character they pointed out and foretold at sundry times and in divers manners, with great variety and a wonderful harmony: and thereby kept up the people's expectation towards it, which otherwise would have languished, and probably have been lost, and prepared them for it. Thus the spirit of prophecy in the ancient prophets, was appointed and ordered for very valuable ends. It was not only useful to the age and nation in which they lived, but the advantage arising from it is of extensive influence to other nations, and to succeeding generations. Their pathetic exhortations to the practice of righteousness, their lively warnings and reproofs for sin, and the just and noble ideas they give of God and religion are of signal use in all ages, and the reviewing their predictions, and comparing them with the events, furnishes a glorious proof of the extent of the divine foreknowledge, and the comprehensive views of the divine providence: it tends to strengthen our belief of a most wise presiding mind governing the world, and the affairs of mankind; as well as gives a glorious attestation to the divine mission of our lord Jesus Christ, and to the evangelical dispensation, as I shall have occasion to show more fully afterwards.

The account our author at first gives of the institution of the prophetic order seems to be very much to their honour, p. 282, &c. For though he will not allow that they were extraordinarily inspired of God, yet if his own account of their institution be just, it was one of the noblest and best designed in the world, and is scarce to be paralleled among the wisest and most celebrated institutions of antiquity, and redounds very much to the honour of Samuel, whom he makes the author it. He tells us, that when the priesthood was fallen into great degeneracy, Samuel's design in instituting the prophetic order, was 'to restore learning and virtue, and to restrain the vices both of priests and people.' He represents the prophets as devoted to learning, study, and retirement, as studying history, rhetoric, poetry, and the knowledge of nature, but above all, moral philosophy, or the knowledge of God's providence, and human nature: that the moral rules to be observed in this society were

very strict and severe; they were to live in a low abstemious way, retired from the world, without ambition or avarice, and to exemplify as well as preach the most perfect righteousness and rigid virtue; and to rebuke and correct vice wherever they found it without the least respect of persons.' This being so, no wonder that he expressly calls it 'a most wise and excellent institution, especially since he affirms, p. 284, that 'the proper business of the prophets, and the design of their institution and order, was to preach moral truth and righteousness, to keep the people to the moral law, and bring them to repentance as the necessary means of their happiness and safety, and the only condition of the divine favour.' And he repeats it, p. 285, that 'this was undoubtedly the nature and design of the prophetic order and office. And he seems to pity their hard lot in being cast among such an ignorant superstitious people, who often used them very ill,' p. 290. Hitherto one would think he entertained a very good opinion of the prophets, especially since he thinks fit to honour them with that title for which he professeth so great a veneration, that of 'philosophers and moralists,' p. 287; and represents them as opposing the priests, and endeavouring to 'take the people from their superstitious dependence on sacrifices and absolutions.' p. 304.

But who would think it, that, after making this representation of the prophets, he bends his whole force to prove, that they were the most dangerous incendiaries, the greatest plagues to their country, that ever any nation was troubled with; and the cause of all the miseries and calamities that befel it for above three hundred years, and which at length terminated in its ruin. That they 'marked out every king and royal family for destruction, that would not come into their measures, and raised the most formidable and bloody rebellions against them;' that they were continually engaged in fomenting 'religious wars, massacres, outrages, and persecutions; till at length both kings and prophets were exterminated, and the whole nation perfectly enslaved. pp. 299, 304, 320, &c. In a word, so great is his zeal against them, that for a while he seems to forget his animosity against the priests, and lays all the calamities of Israel, not upon the priests, but upon these prophets and moral philosophers. There is no accounting for so extraordinary a rage against them, but that some of them happened to be the penmen of several parts of the holy Scripture, and are represented both in the Old Testament, and in the New, as divinely inspired, and therefore he is determined to do all that in him lies to represent them as the worst of the human race; though at the expense of all that can be called candour, truth, and decency.

That I may observe some order in my remarks, though he observes none in his invectives, I shall first consider what he offers against the divine inspiration of the prophets, and their having the knowledge of things future communicated to them in a supernatural way; and then shall proceed to the reflections he casts upon their moral character, and the attempts he makes to show that they were the enemies and disturbers of their country: after which I shall con-

sider some scattered insinuations against them, which cannot so well be reduced to either of the foregoing heads.

Our author, as I have already hinted, even when he seems to give the most advantageous account of the prophets, plainly denies them to have been divinely inspired. But that 'by their retirement and study they had acquired such high degrees of knowledge, that the common people looked upon them as wholly miraculous and supernatural, and believed they had immediate and free conversation with God, angels, and departed souls, and that they knew the hearts of men, and future events,' &c. p. 284. And he tells us that 'the prophets themselves in time degenerated from the strictness and purity of their first institution, and particularly that they pretended too much to the knowledge of futurity; and by this means sometimes prophesied lies in the name of the Lord, as four hundred of them did at once in the case of Ahab. That they vied with one another in their predictions, and carried their pretensions too high as a means to get money.' pp. 304, 305. And whereas they often foretold future events, he endeavours to account for it several ways. He tells us that 'they had not in any case the knowledge of things future communicated to them in a supernatural way; but that as they were men of study and retirement, who nicely observed the conduct of providence, and the various revolutions of kingdoms and states in their very beginnings and first occasions, this might enable them upon rational principles, to give a very near guess at what would happen, especially as to the great turns and changes of nations and governments.' He instances in the predictions of the Assyrian and Babylonish captivity, which he thinks every man that had eyes in his head might have foreseen as unavoidable. But being sensible that all this will hardly account for particular, express, circumstantial predictions of future events, he thinks fit to add, that 'the prophets when they struck at future events were not very particular and circumstantial as to time, place, persons, &c. They generally deliver their presages in dark and obscure terms, and only relate for the most part their dreams and visions of the night, the interpretation of which is extremely difficult, and may be applied to a thousand different events from that time to this, and so on to the end of the world. And that by this means the ancient prophets in great measure saved themselves, and were not answerable for particulars in futurity, whilst they were soothing the superstitious people with an imaginary knowledge of what was to come,' p. p. 288, 289. And lastly, he tells us, that 'there are likewise several instances to be given, in which the prophets brought about their own predictions by accomplishing in a natural way, what they had resolved upon before. He instances in the method taken by Samuel to set aside Saul and his family, and in the management of the prophet Elisha with Hazael the chief captain of the king of Syria. p. 305.

I have laid these several passages together, that the authors sentiments may appear in their just light, and in their full strength.

That the prophets, strictly and properly so called, were not only

regarded by the vulgar as divinely inspired, but that they themselves pretended to be so, and that they delivered messages to the people as what they had received by immediate revelation from God, is incontestable. And not only did they in the name of God deliver solemn warnings and exhortations to the people to engage them to repentance, and the practice of true religion and righteousness, but they frequently professed to foretel future events, and that not merely by probable conjecture, but in a way of certain prediction, as having the knowledge of them extraordinarily communicated to them by God himself. It will be easily allowed that some of the prophecies have a considerable obscurity in them, for which several reasons might be assigned; but it is also certain that many of their predictions are clear and express, particular and circumstantial, as to time, place, persons, and that with regard to events which no human sagacity could foresee, and which none of the ways mentioned by this author can possibly account for.

Thus, e. g. what could be more plain or circumstantial than that prediction of a prophet to king Jeroboam, that a child should be born unto the house of David, Josiah by name, who should destroy the altar at Bethel, and burn dead men's bones upon it to pollute it; and this foretold three hundred and fifty years before it happened? 1 Kings xiii. 2—6. Could any thing be more distinct or more wonderful than Isaiah's foretelling the victories and conquests of Cyrus by name, and his letting go the captives of Judah, not for price or reward, and this near two hundred years before it came to pass, see Isa. xlv. 1—5, 13. Our author thinks it was easy to foresee the conquest and captivity of Israel by the Assyrians, who were then in the height of their power; but was it possible for any human sagacity to foresee that, when Sennacherib at the head of a mighty army was on the point of besieging Jerusalem, and gave out such terrible threatenings against it, and there was no human force to oppose him; he should not besiege it at all, nor so much as shoot an arrow against it, but be obliged to return with disgrace to his own land, and there be slain with the sword? and yet this the prophet Isaiah clearly and expressly foretold, and it was accomplished in every circumstance; see the xxxvii. chapter of Isaiah, and 2 Kings xix. The same prophet, when Babylon was at peace with Judea, and all the danger of the Jews seemed to be from Assyria, which was then in its greatest power; and none from Babylon at all; foretold to Hezekiah the destruction of Jerusalem by the king of Babylon, and the carrying the royal family captive thither, above a hundred years before that destruction happened, Isa. xxxix. 6, 7. He also expressly foretold the dreadful destruction of Babylon itself, and the utter desolation that should come upon it. Isa. xiv. 22, 23. The prophet Jeremiah foretels the same destruction and ruin of Babylon, and that with many remarkable circumstances relating to the taking of the city by the Medes and Persians, all which were literally accomplished. And this was foretold at a time when Babylon was the most powerful empire in the world, and in the height of all its prosperity and grandeur. This writer thinks

there is nothing in Jeremiah's foretelling that Jerusalem should be taken and destroyed by the Chaldeans at a time when they were so powerful, and the Jews so weak, though considering the alliance the Jews had with Egypt a very potent kingdom, and whose interest it was to oppose the Chaldeans, it might not be so easy to foresee it as he imagines; but how came that prophet to foretel that the captivity of the Jews should last seventy years, and that at the end of that fixed time they should be restored to their own country again; Jer. xxv. 12. xxix. 10. Hosea and Amos both foretold the destruction of Israel by the Assyrians in the days of Jeroboam the second, when that kingdom was in the most flourishing circumstances it had ever been in, Hos. x. 5, 6. Amos vii. 10—17. The same prophet Amos also foretold the entire destruction of Damascus and Syria, with this circumstance, that the people should be 'carried captive to Kir;' as they actually were by Tiglath-Pileser king of Assyria, near threescore years after the prediction, according to archbishop Usher's computation, compare Amos i. 4, 5. with 1 Kings xvi. 9. In the days of king Ahaz, when Israel was in confederacy with Syria against Judah, and threatened to destroy it, the prophet Isaiah foretold, that 'before the child' he then had by the prophetess should be able to say 'my father, or my mother, the riches of Damascus, and the spoil of Samaria, should be taken away by the king of Assyria.' Isa. viii. 3, 4. And he had before that expressly foretold, that 'within threescore and five years Ephraim should be so destroyed as to be no more a people, Isa. vii. 8, and how literally that was accomplished, see Usher's *Annales vet. Testam.* p. 108. There are many other most express and circumstantial predictions in the prophecies of Isaiah. After having given a most lively description of the destruction of Moab and its chief cities, he fixes the precise time for it: 'The Lord hath spoken, saying, Within three years as the years of an hireling, and the glory of Moab shall be condemned.' Isa. xvi. 14. So also chap. xxi. 16: 'Thus hath the Lord said unto me, Within a year, according to the years of an hireling, and all the glory of Kedar shall fail,' &c. He expressly foretold, not only that Hezekiah should recover of his dangerous sickness, but that God would add 'fifteen years to his life,' Isa. xxxviii. 5, 6. The desolate state of Tyre is precisely determined to seventy years, Isa. xxii. 15. The prophet Ezekiel not only foretels in the strongest terms the desolation of Egypt by Nebuchadnezzar, but expressly declares that 'at the end of forty years God would bring again the captivity of Egypt; and it should again become a kingdom; but he adds that it should be a base one, and that it should 'no longer exalt itself above the nations;' which was exactly accomplished, see Ezek. chap. xxix.

It were easy to produce more instances of this kind out of the prophetic writings, to which might be added several other wonderful and express predictions, of which we have an account in the sacred history. Thus, e. g. was it possible for any human wisdom to foresee that the huge host of Moabites, Ammonites, and Edomites, that threatened to swallow up Judah, should on a sudden be

destroyed, without the Jews fighting in their own defence ; and that they needed only to 'stand still, and see the salvation of God?' And yet this was expressly foretold by a prophet in the name of God to Jehoshaphat and the men of Judah, when they were overwhelmed with terror; and it was immediately and wonderfully accomplished, 2 Chron. xx. 14, &c. By what human means could the prophet Elisha reveal to the king of Israel the king of Syria's most secret projects and counsels ; or assure him, when Samaria was reduced to the extremity of distress by famine and the host of the Syrians, and no human succour near, that in one day's time there should be such a plenty of all things, as if provisions had come pouring down upon them from heaven? These and many other predictions that might be mentioned are not delivered merely in 'general ambiguous terms,' as this writer tells us was usually done 'to save the prophet's credit;' but are clear, express, and determinate, applied to particular circumstances of time, place, and persons, which it was impossible for any man on earth by any merely human sagacity to foresee; many of them contrary to all appearances, and to all the rules of human probability, and which it was absolutely out of the power of the prophets themselves to bring about by any natural means, by which he pretends they often took care to fulfil their own predictions. In a word, they were things which could only be known to Him whose providence governs all events, and who hath the times and seasons, the events of nations and particular persons in his own hands.

But especially the prophecies of Daniel are highly remarkable, which take in the fates of so many different nations for so long a series of years, the succession of four mighty empires, and the principal revolutions that were to befall them, in the very order in which they were to happen. Our author indeed would fain have it believed that Daniel flourished in the reign of Artaxerxes Mnemon, i. e. one hundred and forty years after the time in which he really lived.* But even on that supposition his prophecy of the

* If we inquire what it is that our author offers to support so extraordinary a conjecture, which is entirely contrary to the whole history of the book of Daniel, and to the express testimony of the prophet Ezekiel who lived in the time of the Babylonish captivity, and speaks of Daniel as at that time famous for his wisdom and piety, Ezek. xiv. 14; xxviii. 3; it is no more than this; he affirms, that it is evident, and the text expressly tells us, that the decree or commandment for the building of the city and restoration of the people, from which the seventy weeks are to begin, came out at the very time when Daniel was offering up his prayers and supplications for the liberty of his nation. And this decree or commandment for building the city, &c. came forth in the seventh year of Artaxerxes Mnemon, at which time therefore Daniel must have had his vision, see pp. 337, 339. But not to urge that the Artaxerxes in whose reign this decree came forth was not Artaxerxes Mnemon, but Artaxerxes Longimanus, who lived sixty years before, as is proved among others by Dr. Prideaux; I shall only observe, that what this writer saith is evident from the text, doth not appear from the text at all. The commandment mentioned, ver. 25, from which the seventy weeks are to begin, is expressly said to be 'the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem.' But the commandment mentioned in the 23d verse, that came forth at the beginning of Daniel's supplication, is not said to be the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem, though our author tells us the text, and the angel expressly declares it to be so; but is manifestly to be understood of the commandment that was given by God to the angel Gabriel, to go and make known to Daniel those future events con-

seventy weeks, according to our author's own computation would be true: and all his wonderful predictions concerning the overturning the Persian empire by Alexander the Great, and the division of his empire into four kingdoms, and the wars, alliances, and principal transactions between the kings of Syria and Egypt, which are related with so amazing a particularity; and concerning the profaning the temple, and the miseries brought upon the Jews by Antiochus Epiphanes; as well as concerning the vast power of the Roman empire, and the utter destruction of the Jewish state, the city, and the sanctuary, soon after the Messiah's coming. These things show the certainty of prophecy: and are instances of an exact and certain knowledge of future events that can only be supposed to proceed from God himself, whose eye penetrateth through all ages, who 'ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will.'

From these and many other instances that might be produced, it manifestly appears how vainly this writer would insinuate, that the prophecies were nothing more than general conditional declarations of God's favour to the good, and denunciations of his judgments against the wicked, see pp. 284, 285. And whereas he pretends that 'to humour the people, they were often obliged to deliver many promises and declarations of good to the nation, in absolute terms, which were plainly intended as conditional; and therefore as often as they pronounced any

tained in the prophecy of the seventy weeks. It is observed, ver. 20, that while Daniel was speaking in prayer, 'Gabriel being caused to fly swiftly, touched him, and said, O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding; at the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth, and I am come to show thee: therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision,' that is, at the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came from God to me, ordering me to show thee what is to come to pass, and accordingly, I am come to make thee understand the vision. We have an instance of such a commandment given to Gabriel before in a former vision, chap. viii. 16, where a voice came to Gabriel, 'Make this man, i. e. Daniel, to understand the vision.' If the author who pretends to urge the express declaration of the text, will be governed by what is there expressly declared; this prayer and supplication of Daniel was made in the first year of Darius the Mede, chap. ix. 1, 2, that is, 141 years before the seventh year of Artaxerxes Mnemon, in which according to him the decree for building and restoring Jerusalem came forth. And this is further confirmed by the occasion of Daniel's prayer, which is there said to be this, that he understood that the seventy years spoken of by the prophet Jeremiah for the continuance of the desolations of Jerusalem were on the point of being accomplished. But to this our author hath a short answer, viz. that 'the book of Daniel, as we now have it, has been in this case greatly interpolated and corrupted, as he could demonstrate were this a proper time and place for it,' p. 338. But upon his supposition as he puts it, the book of Daniel must not have been merely interpolated. All the historical part of it which wholly relates to things done in the reigns of Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, and Darius the Mede, must be one entire forgery. This our author, no doubt, 'could demonstrate, if this were a proper time and place for it.' And I believe the reader is convinced, that he would have thought any time and place proper to have done it, if it had been in his power. I shall not meddle with his computation of the seventy weeks; because though he gives a very wrong account of it, yet according to his own computation, the prophecy was literally accomplished. I shall only observe, that in order to bring his account the better to bear, he tells us that Daniel fixes the time when the Messiah was to be cut off, to be sixty-two weeks after the coming forth of the commandment, &c., p. 337, whereas it is plain from the text, that he reckons seven weeks and sixty-two weeks, that is, sixty-nine weeks of years after the coming forth of the commandment.

judgments from God, or impending calamities for the sins of the nation, they always promised a future deliverance,' &c. It is evident from the whole of the prophetic writings, that the pleasing or humouring the people was not what they had in view. They delivered the message they received from God with a noble boldness, whether it pleased the princes and people or not. They often foretold the most dismal calamities, not merely as things which they were afraid might happen, but as what would most certainly befall them. And when they foretold a national deliverance, or a better state of things, it was not because they thought this necessary to humour the people, but because they knew by the spirit of prophecy that such a deliverance would certainly be. Thus it was in the case of the return from the Babylonish captivity, and of Cyrus's letting the captives go free, both which were most clearly and expressly foretold, though they were events which as thus circumstanced no man could foresee. And with regard to other nations as well as the Jews, the prophets sometimes after foretelling the calamities that should befall them, expressly foretel their restoration and deliverance; and surely it cannot be pretended that this also was to humour the Jews. The only reason for it was, that they knew by the spirit of prophecy, that the fact would be so. Thus Jeremiah foretels the captivity and restoration of Elam, Jer. xlix. 34—39, and of Moab. chap. xlviii. 47, as Isaiah doth concerning Cyrus, Isa. xxii. 1—7, 18, and Ezekiel concerning Egypt, Ezek. xxix. 1—13, 14.

With regard to the prophecies relating to the Messiah, he pretends that the Messiah spoken of by the prophets was to be no more than a temporal prince, and his kingdom of a worldly nature; and that he was only to be a king of the Jews, and a national Deliverer and Saviour of them only, and not of the Gentiles. And he farther intimates, that this promise of the Messiah was only conditional, and suspended upon the Jews' good behaviour, as the promise of the uninterrupted succession of the crown in David's family was conditional. The proper place for considering this will be when I come more particularly to examine the objections he raises against the New Testament; when I propose to show, that the kingdom attributed to the Messiah by the prophets is not merely like the kingdoms of this world, of a secular nature, but erected for spiritual ends and purposes, and that it is represented by the prophets as an universal benefit, not confined to the Jews, but extending to all nations. From whence it follows, that the promise of the Messiah was not merely conditional, to depend upon the repentance and obedience of the Jews; for why should a benefit designed for mankind in general, be suspended upon the good behaviour of the Jews only? nor is this condition ever once mentioned. On the contrary, it is foretold in the prophecies, that when he actually came, the Jews would reject him, and use him ill; and that soon after his coming and being cut off, their city and sanctuary should be destroyed, though it is intimated, that afterwards they should seek to him in the latter days, and be restored to a happy

state. This future conversion of the Jews, and a more glorious state of the universal church than hath hitherto appeared, many of the prophecies seem to point to: and I doubt not these prophecies will in their due season be accomplished, though I am sensible that by this, I incur the author's heavy censure, who severely inveighs against those that understand the prophecies in this sense, as upholding the Jews in their vanity and presumption.

But to proceed to the farther reflections he makes upon the prophets, he observes, that by 'pretending too much to the knowledge of future events, the prophets sometimes told lies in the name of the Lord, as four hundred of them did at once in the case of Ahab.' Thus in order to expose the true prophets of God he confounds them with the false ones, as if they were to be accountable for all the falsehoods that were ever uttered by any that took upon them the name of prophet. It will be easily granted, that there were at that time false prophets as well as true ones. Some of these might perhaps have been educated in the prophetic schools under the discipline of the true prophets, and under that pretence took upon them the character of prophets, though they never had any extraordinary inspiration, merely for serving their own ends of ambition or avarice. Or there might be schools of prophets set up under the countenance of the kings in opposition to the true ones, whom they hated for their divine zeal and impartiality in reproving their faults and vices. But these prophets, concerning whom, it is often declared, that God did not send them, and that they prophesied 'a false vision, and the deceit of their own heart,' were of a very different character from the true prophets of the Lord. They were too complaisant to contradict the court religion, or the prevailing fashionable vices and humours of the prince or people. They are represented as very wicked themselves, and encouraging the people in their wickedness, see Jer. xxiii. 11, 14—17; xxviii. 7. Instead of denouncing judgments against them for their crimes, they prophesied of nothing but peace and prosperity, and soothed and flattered them in their vices, Jer. vi. 14; xiv. 13; Ezek. xiii. 10, 16. And they were so far from joining with the true prophets, that they were their greatest enemies and persecutors,* and joined interests with the corrupt part of the priesthood against them, and had the people on their side too, because they pleased and flattered them, Jer. v. 31. These false prophets were ready as occasion served, and as they saw it would please the king or people, to prophesy in the name of the Lord, or in the name of Baal, Jer. ii. 8; xxiii. 13.

Of this kind were the four hundred prophets that prophesied falsely to Ahab in the name of the Lord. Hence Micaiah, the true prophet of God, represents them as Ahab's prophets, and not God's. They were such as he himself chose and approved, because they always took care to prophesy what they knew would be acceptable to him. Whereas he hated Micaiah, because he dealt impartially

* See Jer. xx. 2, 6; xxvii. 9, 16; xxviii. 2, 10, 11, 16; xxix. 21, 23, 32; 1 Kings xxii. 24.

with him, and told him the plain truth. This author indeed would have it thought, that these four hundred prophets bade him go up to Ramoth-Gilead, with a design that he should be killed by the Syrians in revenge for the prophets of the Lord whom he had caused to be slain before. Whereas the truth is, they only said so, because they knew it would please the king, which was all these court prophets had in view, who were always for prophesying smooth and acceptable things. Besides they probably flattered themselves that the king would prove victorious, which seemed far more likely than the contrary, as he had defeated the Syrians in the two last battles he had fought with them, and now had the king of Judah to assist him. But Micaiah, who was a true prophet of the Lord, conducted himself after a quite different manner. He discovers his own character, and that of all the true prophets of God, in the answer he made to the king's messenger, who was for persuading him to speak 'that which was good unto the king, as the other prophets had done; as the Lord liveth, what the Lord saith unto me, that will I speak,' 1 Kings xxii. 13, 14. And accordingly he plainly told Ahab, that if he went up to Ramoth-Gilead he should die. It was impossible for him in a human way to foresee that a Syrian drawing his bow at a venture, should smite the king of Israel between the 'joints of the harness.' No event could be seemingly more contingent. And Ahab took all the precautions in his power to prevent it by disguising himself, and getting Jehoshaphat to put on his robes. And yet Micaiah speaks of his death with an absolute assurance, and pawns his liberty and life upon it, ver. 27, 28, he was sure of it, because he was supernaturally inspired with the knowledge of it by God himself. No consequence, therefore, can be drawn from the false prophets to the true ones; that because there were some that falsely pretended to divine inspiration, therefore there were none that were really thus inspired. Since in the instance produced by this writer, though there was a number of persons that falsely pretended to the name of prophets, yet there was a true prophet of the Lord, who had the knowledge of a future contingency revealed to him in an extraordinary manner by God himself. The characters of the false prophets and the true were entirely different, and it was no hard matter to distinguish them; not only because of the different tendency of their doctrines and predictions, which in the one was to flatter the kings and people for their own interest, and to encourage them in their vices; in the other to reprove them impartially even at the hazard of their own lives for their sins, and to turn them from their evil ways to real repentance, and the practice of righteousness. But especially because the one were enabled clearly and certainly to foretel future events which no human knowledge could foresee, and which were exactly accomplished; but the other either spoke only in general ambiguous terms, or if they undertook to foretel things future clearly and expressly, were confuted by the event, as Ahab's prophets were. And whenever they pretended to come in competition with the true pro-

phets to God, and to contradict their predictions, God gave his own prophets a visible superiority, sufficient to convince all that observed of the great difference between them. This appears in the instance now mentioned, and in the remarkable contest between Hananiah and Jeremiah, of which we have an account in chap. xxviii. of Jeremiah; where Jeremiah not only tells him, that the Lord had not sent him; but expressly declares, 'Thus saith the Lord, This year thou shalt die, because thou hast taught rebellion against the Lord.' And accordingly he died that year in the seventh month, see ver. 16, 17. So in the case of Ahab and Zedekiah, who prophesied lies in the name of the Lord, Jeremiah foretold the dreadful punishment that should be inflicted on them, and even the particular death they should die; that the king of Babylon should cause 'them to be roasted in the fire.' Jer. xxix. 21—23.

Thus I have considered the attempts this writer makes against the prophets with respect to their foretelling things to come. There is no accounting for their many clear, express, and circumstantial predictions of future events in any of those ways which he mentions, or indeed in any other way than by supposing them to have the knowledge of those things communicated to them in an extraordinary way by God himself; for it is the peculiar prerogative of the Supreme Being, the most wise Governor of the world and of mankind, to know the things which shall be hereafter. And this is what he challenges to himself, as that whereby he is eminently distinguished above all other beings, Isa. xli. 22, 23; xlv. 9, 10.

CHAPTER IX.

Some general reflections on the attempt the author makes to show, that the prophets were the great disturbers of their country, and that they were of persecuting principles, enemies to toleration and liberty of conscience. It is shown that they were the truest friends to their country, and that if their counsels had been hearkened to, its ruin would have been prevented. His invective against the prophet Samuel, whom he represents as the founder of the prophetic order. His pretence that he kept Saul twenty years out of the exercise of the royal power, after he was chosen king. The account he gives of Samuel's quarrel against Saul for deposing him from the high-priesthood, and of the several plots laid by him for the destruction of that prince, especially in the affair of the Amalekites, considered. In what sense it is said that it repented God that he had made Saul king. That this was not a pretence of Samuel to cast his own follies and want of foresight upon the Almighty. David's character considered and vindicated. His behaviour towards Saul shown to be noble and generous. Notwithstanding the faults he was guilty of, in his general conduct he was an excellent person. Concerning his dancing before the ark. The author's base representation of it. Lord S——y's account of it, and of the Saltant naked spirit of prophecy, considered.

LET us now proceed to what our author offers against the moral character of the prophets, and particularly the attempt he makes to show, that they were the great incendiaries and disturbers of their country for above three hundred years, and at length proved its ruin. This is the substance of his long invective for above thirty pages together from p. 291 to p. 323. It is evident he intends all this merely against those that are represented in Scripture as the true prophets of the Lord. For the false ones, who always took care for their own interest to be of the king's religion, and never reproved them or the people for their vices and idolatries, do not come under his accusation. And he speaks of Baal's prophets with great complacency, as men of benevolent dispositions, and friends to toleration, and liberty of conscience.

But before I enter on a distinct consideration of this writer's invective, I cannot but make this one general remark upon it; how inconsistent he is with himself in the account he gives of the prophets and their conduct. He represents them as persons that by their original institution were to 'live in a low abstemious way, retired from the world without ambition or avarice, and wholly devoted to contemplation and study. That they were never to involve themselves in secular affairs, to push at fortune, or to make any great figure or splendid appearance in the world.' And again he talks of 'their absolute retirement and recess from the business and pleasures of the world.' And yet the same author that gives this account of them, represents them as continually engaged in all the disturbances and revolutions of the state, raising numberless rebellions and commotions, able to turn out one royal family, and place another upon the throne at pleasure. And what makes this still more extraordinary is, that by his own account, these prophets must have had very little interest. He represents the kings as engaged in a perpetual struggle and contest with them; and that 'the priests generally hated them, for declaiming against them, and endeavouring to keep the people to the moral law, and take them off from their superstitious dependence upon sacrifices and absolutions;' and that 'herein the people were generally in the interests of the priests,' p. 304. And to this it may be added, that the false prophets who were countenanced by the kings, and who joined interests with the priests, and flattered and pleased the people, opposed and hated the true prophets of the Lord. Now this being the case; that a few men bred up in colleges and places of retirement, without ambition or avarice, retired from the noise of the world, and devoted to study and contemplation, and who had the kings, the priests, the pretended prophets and body of the people against them, should yet have it in their power to overturn kingdoms, to raise perpetual insurrections and commotions, and to transfer the crown, when they pleased from one royal family to another, without money, without interest, without force, yea all these engaged in an opposition to them, is a supposition so wild and extravagant, that one would think scarce any man in his senses was capable of admitting it. But there is nothing that has a wider

swallow than infidelity, which though it makes the slightest difficulty on the side of revelation an insuperable objection, can admit the most absurd and unaccountable suppositions in the world in favour of a darling scheme.

The general charge he advances against the prophets, and which he supposes to lie at the foundation of all the commotions and insurrections, the religious wars and massacres of which he accuses them, is their zeal against idolatry, which he represents as if they were utter enemies to all toleration and religious liberty. And on the other hand he commends the kings that are branded in Scripture for their wickedness and idolatry, as only maintaining indulgence, toleration, and liberty of conscience.

That by the law of Moses there was to be no toleration of idolatry in the commonwealth of Israel, is very true, and has been already accounted for. They were not, indeed, brought under an obligation to endeavour to extirpate idolatry in all other countries by fire and sword, as this writer represents it, but they were not to suffer it in their own. Idolatry was the most express breach of the original contract or covenant between God and them, by which they held the land of Canaan, and all their privileges as a peculiar people, and was a subverting the whole constitution. The kings, therefore, whom this author honours with the glorious title of friends of toleration and liberty of conscience (though I shall show they were far from proceeding upon this principle, except by toleration be meant a liberty for idolatry, but not for the true worship of God) were really guilty of subverting the fundamental laws, and were the greatest enemies to their country, and took the readiest way to expose it to the greatest miseries and calamities, which had in that case been expressly threatened in the original covenant. And those that at the hazard of all that was dear to them stood up for the ancient constitution, established by the express command and authority of God himself, and bore testimony against that prevailing idolatry and wickedness which they knew tended to dissolve and ruin the state, and bring captivity and desolation upon princes and people, showed themselves the truest patriots, and discovered a noble zeal for the welfare, the glory, and prosperity of their country. But when we farther consider them as extraordinarily sent and commissioned by God himself for that purpose, this surely doth fully justify them. When with a noble and impartial zeal they reprov'd kings, and the greatest men, for their idolatry and other vices, and foretold the dreadful judgments and calamities that would be inflicted on them without reformation and repentance, in all this they only executed the commission which God intrusted them with, and delivered the messages which he sent them upon. And if this author will undertake to prove, that it was unjust in God to inflict those judgments on wicked and idolatrous kings, and on a sinful and rebellious people, he will do something; but if it was not wrong in God to inflict them, it was not wrong in the prophets to denounce them, when he sent them to do it in his name. And indeed his raising up a succession of prophets to give

them such solemn warnings, and exhort them to repentance, and enabling them clearly and expressly to foretel the calamities that should befall them and their kings, whereby, when they came to pass, they might know that they were sent upon them in a way of judgment for their sins. This was a signal instance of the divine mercy towards a guilty people, and showed what proper methods he took to prevent that destruction which they were bringing upon themselves. And if the body of the people and their kings still continued incorrigible under all the methods made use of by divine providence to reclaim them, both by the judgments inflicted on them, and the many signal mercies and deliverances he vouchsafed them from time to time, and which were also expressly foretold by the prophets he sent to warn them in his name, this only showed how just it was at length to inflict upon them that utter ruin and captivity which had been so long threatened, and which they had so well deserved. But to lay this their ruin to the charge of the prophets, and to represent them as the cause of all their miseries is the most unjust thing in the world, when the very contrary to this is manifestly true, that if their faithful counsels, their solemn warnings, and earnest exhortations had been hearkened unto, and complied with, the destruction of that people had been prevented. And it was the rejecting their wholesome and excellent admonitions that brought misery and ruin on 'that ancient and famous nation,' as our author calls them, p. 320, which is the only place in his book where he seems to speak honourably of the Jews, with a view to lay the greater load upon the prophets for causing their ruin.

But let us now proceed to the instance he brings to make good his general charge.

He first falls into a furious invective against the prophet Samuel, whom he represents as the founder of the prophetic order. By his own account, his design in instituting that order was to 'restore learning and virtue, to keep the people to the moral law, and to restrain the vices both of priests and people : ' he represents him as endeavouring to retrieve as much 'wisdom and knowledge' as he could 'from its ancient ruins,' and taking care that the prophets should be instructed and educated in it; and tells us that the 'proper business and design of their institution and order was to preach up moral truth and righteousness.' One would think the author of this 'most wise and excellent constitution,' as he himself calls it, must have been a wise and excellent person. It is true that after giving this account of the institution of the prophetic order, he pretends, p. 292, to let us into a farther view of Samuel's design in that institution. He tells us, that upon the people's desiring a king, Samuel, who saw 'the revolution that must soon happen in the state, instituted this academic order of prophets, who by their weight and influence with the people, were to moderate and restrain the power of the kings, and at the same time keep the princes and people too within the boundaries of the moral law.' Thus those prophets who, according to our author, were no more

than moralists and philosophers, or preachers of 'moral truth and righteousness,' and who by their institution 'were wholly devoted to contemplation and study,' and 'never to involve themselves in secular affairs: these men were at the same time instituted and designed to hold the balance in the state, and to govern kings and people as they pleased. One would think by this representation that they were invested with a power like that of the Ephori, among the Lacedemonians. But then he should have supposed them like those Ephori, the first men in the state, at the head of all affairs, and not a mere order of academics, men devoted to study and philosophy, and that were never to concern themselves in state affairs at all. This may give the reader a specimen of our author's profound skill in politics, and how well qualified he is for forming plans for republics, and schemes of government. However one should think that it was an excellent design if it could be effected, and what all the states in the world should wish for, to have an order of persons among them that might 'keep the princes and people too within the boundaries of the moral law;' still Samuel's design even upon this representation of it was very good. But the author who has hitherto observed some measures with regard to Samuel, soon throws off all disguise, and represents him as engaged in restless attempts to destroy his king, and ruin his country; as carrying on a series of wicked frauds, treasons, and conspiracies for gratifying his own ambition and resentment, and sanctifying all with the pretence of religion, and the holy name of God. It is thus that this spiteful writer abuses and calumniates one of the brightest characters in Scripture, and one of the most excellent governors we read of in history. As a prophet he was so eminent, that we are told that even while he was yet young, the 'Lord was yet with him, and did not let one of his words fall to the ground: so that all Israel from Dan even to Beersheba, knew that Samuel was established to be a prophet of the Lord,' 1 Sam. iii. 19—21. As a governor he not only delivered his country from their most dangerous enemies and oppressors; but after he had governed them many years to his old age, was able to appeal to the whole nation, whether he had in any one single instance defrauded or oppressed any of them, or been guilty of the least corruption or wrong. And nothing could be more glorious than the testimony that was given by the united suffrage of all the people, joined with a solemn appeal to God himself, concerning the untainted integrity, justice, and clemency he had shown, in the whole course of his administration; see 1 Sam. xii. 1—5. And accordingly not only was he respected by the whole nation when alive, and lamented when dead, 1 Sam. xxv. 1, but his memory was always had in great veneration among them. Nor is he ever spoken of by any writer of that nation, but with the highest esteem and admiration for his piety and virtue. And yet our author does his utmost to traduce him as a monster of pride, ambition, falsehood, and revenge. He represents this excellent man, who on all occasions showed such a love to his country and a zeal for his welfare, as 'having little compassion for his country,'

in its greatest calamity, and 'beholding the devastation of it by the Philistines, not only with indifference but with pleasure,' in hopes that the king whom he himself had recommended to the people should be destroyed. And when he speaks of the victories Saul obtained over the enemies of his country, and his 'settling the nation in peace,' he represents this as done to the 'great mortification of this prophet,' and in spite of all the opposition of Samuel and the prophets, see pp. 295, 296, 298. Yea, he descends so low in his invectives, as to insinuate that Samuel caused the asses of Saul's father to be stolen, and so was able to 'tell Saul what had betided them,' p. 305. It would be honouring such mean and spiteful reflections too much to give them a particular answer, which have not the least pretence from history to support them, and only show the determined hatred and malice of this writer against the man whom he supposes to have been the father and founder of the prophets.

I shall only take notice of those reflections which he pretends to support from the account given us in the history itself. Thus he most absurdly pretends, that after Saul was chosen king at Mizpah, Samuel presently sent him home again, where he lived a private life for at least twenty years, whilst Samuel really exercised the regal power. And that it was upon the occasion of the Ammonites besieging Jabesh Gilead, and the success Saul obtained against them; that he was invested with 'the real state, power, and grandeur of a king,' because the people would have it so; and Samuel, against his own inclination, was under a necessity to comply with it. And 'that this must not have been less than twenty years after Saul had been first anointed, he says is plain, because Saul, when first anointed, was but a young man, as the text tells us, and Josephus saith he was then thirty, and therefore Jonathan then could be but a child, but now Jonathan was grown up an expert soldier, and the chief captain under the king,' p. 294. But if this writer will govern himself by the chronology of Josephus, the besieging of Jabesh Gilead by the Ammonites was but a month after Saul's inauguration at Mizpah, though our author makes it to be no less than twenty years. And that this was in some ancient copies of the books of Samuel, or at least was an ancient tradition among the Jews, may well be supposed, since the Septuagint have it in their translation of 1 Sam. xi. 1. Then Nahash the Ammonite 'came up about a month after,' &c., *ὥς μήνα*, and that it could be but a short time, is evident because it appears from what Samuel saith to the people of Israel, 1 Sam. xii. 12, that the war which 'Nahash the Ammonite threatened them with,' was the immediate occasion of their desiring a king to reign over them. And accordingly the first action we read of after Saul's being chosen king, is that 'Nahash the Ammonite came up and encamped against Jabesh Gilead, the inhabitants of which thereupon sent to Saul for assistance and relief. The solemn renewal and confirmation of the kingdom to Saul at Gilgal, which followed immediately on the victory he obtained on that occasion, appears plainly to have been done at Samuel's own motion,

though our author thinks proper to represent it as if it was very much against his inclination, and because the people forced him to it; see 1 Sam. xi. 14. If, therefore, this writer's observation was right, that at the time of renewing the kingdom to Saul at Gilgal with the universal consent of the people, which was immediately after the affair at Jabesh Gilead, Jonathan was grown up and become an expert soldier, it would only follow that Saul, at the time of his being first anointed king by Samuel, at Ramah, was several years above thirty, which is the age that Josephus assigns him according to our author, though I have not found it so in Josephus himself. But he objects, that the text tells us that Saul was then but a 'young man.' But the word in the original which our translators there render a 'choice young man,' בְּחֹרֶן properly signifies no more than a 'choice man,' and so is sometimes rendered by our translators, as in 2 Sam. vi. 2, where it is made to signify the 'chosen men of Israel.' The words which are more peculiarly used in Scripture to signify young men, are not applied to Saul at all. Or if they were, he might have been forty years old for all that; as is plain from the instance of Rehoboam, who is called a 'young man' נָעָר. And yet it is certain that he was then one and forty years old. Compare 2 Chron. xii. 13, with chap. xiii. 7. But we need not suppose Saul so old. The first time that Jonathan is mentioned is 1 Sam. xiii. 2, where Saul is represented as giving him the command of a 'thousand men.' And it appears from the first verse of that chapter that this was two years at least, probably three (if we take the 'one year' and 'the two years' there mentioned as distinct from one another) after his solemn confirmation at Gilgal. So that if we suppose Saul to have been no more than thirty-four when he was first anointed by Samuel at Ramah, which was some time before his inauguration at Mizpah, as that was some time before the renewal and confirmation of his kingdom at Gilgal, he must be at the time when Jonathan is first mentioned near thirty-eight: and supposing Saul to have had Jonathan when he was eighteen, which is far from being an absurd supposition, then Jonathan, at the time referred to, might be twenty years old, an age sufficient for martial exploits. The great Alexander was but twenty when he came to the throne, and showed himself, to our author's phrase, 'an expert soldier' in many wars in which he was immediately engaged; and he had distinguished himself in an extraordinary manner before this at the battle of Chævonea, when he was but a little above eighteen years old; and when he was but sixteen he was left by his father his lieutenant in Macedonia, and signalized himself by glorious military exploits at the head of an army, as Plutarch informs us. And if we suppose Jonathan to have been as forward as Alexander was, then we need not suppose Saul, at his being first anointed, to have been much above the age assigned to him, as this author tells us by Josephus, and which he himself seems to approve, and so his mighty chronological computation with all he builds upon it, falls to the ground.

This writer next pretends to give us the true reason of the quarrel

between Samuel and Saul. It was 'because after the kingdom was confirmed to him, he deposed Samuel from the high priesthood which he had usurped, and put in Ahia, who was the right heir from Eli, which so highly exasperated the prophet, that from that time he projected the ruin of Saul and his family, and was resolved to convince the king, that no king of Israel must ever pretend to reign independent of the prophetic order.' Now all this which he gives us for history is purely a fiction of his own. He says it is 'plain from the history that Samuel had taken upon him the high-priesthood;' and yet there is not one word of this in the whole history of Samuel. It is plain indeed from the history that Samuel was a prophet, and that he judged the people. But the office of judge was entirely distinct from the high priesthood, nor had there been any one of the judges that was an high priest except Eli. The first time that mention is made of Ahia is 1 Sam. xiv. 3, where he is mentioned as the high priest, and is plainly supposed to have been so before; but of his being made high priest by Saul, or of Samuel's being deposed from that office, there is not the least hint given. So that all this which lies at the foundation of his invective against Samuel is his own invention, and only shows how ready he is to forge history when he cannot find it for his purpose.

The account he gives, pp. 296, 297, is written in the same spirit. After mentioning a 'battle and a complete victory gained by the Philistines,' of which the history saith nothing at all, he proceeds to tell us, that 'Saul waited seven days for Samuel, who had promised to come to him; and the seven days being out, he ordered sacrifices to implore the divine protection against so formidable an enemy, &c., and that as soon as Saul had done this, Samuel, who had lain by as unconcerned before, came and charged the king with a great act of wickedness and disobedience, as having invaded the priestly office, for which he declared, in the name of the Lord, that the king had forfeited his crown and kingdom.' But it is no way probable that Saul stayed till the seven days were out, or quite expired, but rather that through rashness or impatience on the seventh day he began to offer sacrifices. If he had staid but a little longer, Samuel would have come according to his promise, who was then upon the way, and came when Saul had just offered the burnt-offerings, before he had time to offer the peace-offerings, as he had intended to do. Nor doth it appear from the text that Samuel charged Saul with wickedness in invading the priestly office, or that this was the crime by which he had forfeited his crown and kingdom. For it is not improbable there were priests with him by whom he might offer sacrifices. But the fault he is charged with is this, that he had disobeyed the express command of God himself, see 1 Sam. xiii. 13. Samuel said to him, 'Thou hast done foolishly, thou hast not kept the commandment of the Lord thy God which he commanded thee.' And he repeats this charge again in the next verse. There had been an express command delivered to him by Samuel in the name of God, enjoining him to go to

Gilgal, and not to offer burnt-offerings or peace-offerings till Samuel came with directions to him from God himself, to show him what he was to do. This command had been laid upon him when he was first anointed king, see 1 Sam. x. 8, and undoubtedly it had been renewed to him on this occasion; and he had been told that now was the time come for his obeying what had been enjoined him so long before. And this showed that the command was of importance, and that there were some particular reasons for it, though we cannot pretend at this distance to say distinctly what those reasons were, as the text doth not inform us of them. However, supposing it to have been an express command from God delivered to Saul by a true prophet of the Lord sent and inspired by him, and that Saul himself knew and believed it to be so, then his not fulfilling it was evidently a fault, if disobedience to God be so. Now this was really the case. All Israel knew that Samuel was a true prophet of the Lord, and that God 'did not let any of his words fall to the ground,' 1 Sam. iii. 19, 20. And Saul had particular reason to know it, both from the several convincing proofs he himself had of Samuel's divine inspiration when he anointed him to be king over Israel at Ramah, and from what had since happened when the kingdom was confirmed to him at Gilgal, at which time God gave testimony to Samuel from heaven in a most extraordinary manner before Saul and the whole people of Israel, 1 Sam. xii. 16—19. Saul had hitherto had the highest proofs of Samuel's own particular good-will and friendship to him (the author's insinuations to the contrary are perfectly vain and groundless); nor does it appear that he had the least doubt concerning Samuel's being a true prophet, and that what he enjoined him in this matter as from God was the command of God himself. Accordingly, when charged with not keeping the commandment which 'God had commanded him,' though he lays hold on all the pretences he can to excuse himself, he doth not so much as once insinuate that he did not know or was not sure that God had commanded it. And this being the case, he ought not on any pretence whatsoever to have violated what he knew to be God's express command to him, and a command given to him at the very time when he was first anointed king, and since repeated in the name of God. And if the circumstances were trying and difficult, which was all that he had to allege for himself by way of excuse, this was the time for showing his obedience, and waiting patiently with a steady trust and dependence upon God according to his appointment, in which case the prophet assures him his kingdom would have been established. Whereas now he lets him know his kingdom should not continue, but another should be appointed in his stead, because he had not kept that which the Lord commanded him. But the sentence pronounced against him seems not to have been as yet absolute and peremptory. It was not till his disobedience in the affair of Amalek that he was absolutely rejected. Nor is it true, as this writer tells us, that Samuel now left him 'with a resolution never to see his face more,' of which the text saith nothing at all. On the con-

trary, we are informed that Samuel went from Gilgal to Gibeah, the place of Saul's usual residence. And there we find Saul and Jonathan, and the rest of the people got together immediately after. Nor is there any likelihood that Samuel would have gone to that place if he had intended utterly to abandon Saul, and never to see him more.

With regard to the expedition against Amalek, our author goes on in his wonted strain of misrepresentation and calumny. He represents it as evident that the sending Saul against the Amalekites, was 'a plot laid by the prophet for the king's destruction;' and that therefore he ordered that the soldiers should have no part of the booty or plunder, with an intention that the king should 'fall a sacrifice to the enraged soldiery;' and that, being disappointed in this, he 'went off in a rage, and privately anointed David,' pp. 298, 289. Here our author very wisely takes it for granted, that Samuel had no command from God at all to bid Saul go and destroy Amalek: but that he only feigned or pretended it. And if you will but grant him the very thing in question, viz. that what Samuel and the other prophets delivered in the name of God, as by immediate inspiration from him, was not from God at all, but purely a fiction of their own, to colour over their own designs, and gratify their own passions, then this sagacious author will prove, what will be easily granted him on such a supposition, that he and they were false, wicked, and designing men. But if Samuel had an express revelation from God, enjoining him to order Saul to go and extirpate the Amalekites, and if Saul himself believed it to be so, then the case is quite altered. And thus it is represented in the history given us of this matter. Indeed, the command, with regard to the extirpation of Amalek, was no new thing; it was as old as the law. The sentence had been pronounced against them with the greatest solemnity long ago. They had attacked the Israelites immediately after their coming out of Egypt, without the least provocation, in the most barbarous and cruel manner, and in open defiance of the power and majesty of God himself, which had been so illustriously displayed in bringing them out of Egypt, with signs and wonders, and an out-stretched arm. For this, and no doubt for other iniquities, which, like those of the Canaanites, were very great, though not particularly mentioned on this occasion, judgment was then pronounced against them, *Exod. xvii. 14, Deut. xxv. 17, 18.* But God had foreborne the execution of it for a long time, about four hundred years. And we may justly suppose that it was not till the measure of their iniquities was full, and the great wickedness of the present generation of Amalekites, joined to that of their ancestors*, had rendered them ripe for an exemplary vengeance, that he saw fit that the sentence that had been pronounced against them so long before, should be actually executed upon them. And it was his will that it should be executed by that people whom

* Hence they are called, in the command given to Saul, 'the sinners the Amalekites,' to signify that they were sinners above the common rate, *1 Sam. xv. 17.*

they had at first so grievously injured, and whom they had often since invaded. See Judg. iii. 13, vi. 3, 33, vii. 12, x. 22. And that it might appear, that this war was undertaken, not from a desire of spoil, but purely in obedience to God's command, and in execution of his just sentence, they were not to take any of the Amalekites' goods to themselves, and to their own use, but utterly to destroy all that belonged to them, as had been done in the case of Jericho.

Saul and the people do not appear to have had the least doubt of its being a divine command; they knew the sentence that had been pronounced against Amalek in the law itself, and which therefore came to them confirmed by the same glorious attestation which confirmed Moses's divine mission, and the divine original of the laws he gave; besides which they had a fresh command given them to this purpose, from God himself, by the mouth of one whom they all believed and knew to be a true prophet of the Lord. And accordingly, Saul, when endeavouring afterwards to justify or excuse himself, expressly calls it 'the commandment of the Lord,' 1 Sam. xv. 13. This then is the true state of the case: Saul believed that God had expressly commanded him to extirpate the Amalekites, in execution of his just sentence against that wicked people, and to destroy all that belonged to them, without sparing or reserving any part of the spoil. Accordingly he undertook to execute the sentence, and yet in plain opposition to it, not only out of pride and ostentation, as it should seem, spared Agag, the king of the Amalekites, who by what is said of him, ver. 35, appears to have been a merciless tyrant, and probably deserved death as much or more than any of the people, but reserved all that was good among the spoil; and at the same time, that he might seem to obey the divine command, took care 'to destroy utterly every thing that was vile and refuse,' that is, that was not worth keeping, and could be of no profit, ver. 9. This was base hypocrisy, and a presumptuous evading an express command of God, not from any scruple he had of its being a divine command; for this he believed; nor from a principle of mercy and compassion, for this would have carried him to have spared not so much the sheep and oxen as the people, all of whom he destroyed that he could meet with, except Agag, who was probably one of the worst among them; but from a base avaricious principle. And when his disobedience was charged upon him, he first stood upon it that he had exactly obeyed the divine command, though he knew he had not done it; and afterwards pretended that he had reserved those spoils, that out of them he might offer sacrifices to God; and lastly, when he was driven out of his other excuses, meanly laid it upon the fear he stood in of the people, ver. 15, 21, 24. When the truth is, he had authority enough to have restrained the people if he had pleased. And this prince, who pretended to be afraid to destroy the spoil belonging to the Amalekites for fear of offending the people, though he had an express command of God for it, was not afraid utterly to destroy Nob, the city of the priests, with all the inhabitants, of every sex and age,

and even the oxen, asses, and sheep, merely to satisfy his own cruel jealousy and revenge, though it was a thing so displeasing to the people, that his own guards and servants refused to execute it; and he was obliged to get Doeg the Edomite to do it; see ch. xxii. 18, 19. This may let us into this prince's character, who seems to be a great favourite of our author; probably in opposition to the Sacred Writings, because he is there represented as an ill man. And Saul himself was so conscious of his guilt and base conduct in the affair of the Amalekites, that after finding that all his excuses and fair pretences were detected, he at length confesses, without disguise, that he had sinned, and in effect acknowledges, that he had deserved the sentence then pronounced against him by Samuel, in the name of God; and only desires that 'Samuel would honour him before the elders of the people, and before Israel, and would turn again with him to worship the Lord his God,' ver. 30, which upon this his ingenious acknowledgment he consented to do. And this seems to show that all this had passed between Samuel and Saul privately; and that it is not true, as this writer represents it, that 'Samuel denounced the ruin of Saul and his family before all the people.'

It is on this occasion that we are told, that 'it repented God that he had made Saul king over Israel.' But our author tells us, that it was 'Samuel only that repented it,' whom he therefore charges with 'bringing God himself to repentance, and charging his own follies, and want of foresight upon the Almighty.' And the proof he brings for it is, 'that it would be most absurd and senseless to imagine, that God did not know, when Saul was made king, what would happen, but it is plain that Samuel did not know,' pp. 295, 297. This sneer is not so much designed against Samuel, as against the Scriptures in general, in which this phrase of God's repenting is sometimes used, though never with a design to insinuate, that God was ignorant of the event before. But after all this author's bluster, I do not see but that, upon his own principles, God may be said literally to repent. For if nothing can be certainly foreknown but what is necessary, and depends upon necessary causes, as he seems plainly to assert, p. 332, which manifestly implies a denial of God's prescience of future contingencies, then supposing that Saul's actions were free, and depended upon his own free choice, God himself might not be able certainly to foresee how Saul would act after he was made king. Except this author will say, that Saul was under a necessity of doing as he did, and that his actions were necessary, and depended on necessary causes; and how this is consistent with that human liberty and free agency for which he professes so great a zeal, I cannot see. But this is not an absurdity chargeable on the sacred writings, which every where go upon the supposition of God's foreknowing future events, yea even those that are most contingent, and in which the liberty of man is as much exercised and concerned, as in any events or actions whatsoever. When therefore God is represented as repenting of a thing in Scripture, it cannot be the intention of this phrase,

as there used, to insinuate that God was ignorant of the event before. But because when men repent of a thing they alter their course of acting, therefore God's changing his method of procedure or course of acting, with regard to nations, or particular persons, from showing them favour to punishing them, or the contrary, is in accommodation to human infirmity represented under the notion of repenting; though this very change was what he perfectly knew from the beginning, but did not take effect till the proper time came for manifesting his purpose. So in the present case, when God is represented as saying to 'Samuel, it repenteth me that I have set up Saul to be king; for he is turned back from following me, and hath not performed my commandments,' chap. xv. 11, the meaning is no more than this, to signify that God was determined to change his conduct towards Saul, and as he had raised him to be king, so now he would reject him from being king for his disobedience: which disobedience God had foreseen from the beginning, as he foresees all the iniquities men will be guilty of; yet he does not change his conduct towards them till they are actually guilty of those sins that deserve the punishment. But certainly it would be absurd to suppose that Samuel intended by this phrase to insinuate, that God did not foreknow what was to happen, which would be utterly to destroy all prophecy, and consequently his own reputation as a prophet. Accordingly this phrase of God's repenting that he had made Saul to be king, is explained by his rejecting him from being king, compare chap. xv. 11, 23, 26, 35; xvi. 1. But to cut short this writer's pretences, that it was Samuel himself that repented, and put his own repentance upon God, I would observe, that whereas God is twice represented as repenting of having made Saul king, chap. xv. 11, 35, in both those passages we are expressly told how grievous Saul's rejection was to Samuel, and the great trouble and sorrow it gave him. In the first of those passages it is said, that 'it grieved Samuel, and he cried unto the Lord all night.' And in the second, that 'Samuel mourned for Saul.' The sentence he pronounced against that prince, was far from being the effect of any personal enmity or resentment he had against him; on the contrary he loved Saul, and would have done any thing in his power to have obtained a reversal of the sentence against him. He offered up his prayers and cries and tears, but all in vain. And whereas this writer represents it as if immediately, as soon as the affair of the Amalekites was over, he went off in a rage for being disappointed of the design he had formed for Saul's ruin, and 'privately anointed David;' the history plainly intimates, that he continued to mourn for Saul a considerable time, and even carried his grief so far as to incur a reproof from God on the account of it. And it was not till he had an express command from God himself to do it, that he anointed David, chap. xvi. 1. What our author adds concerning 'Samuel's managing matters so as to bring David into Saul's family, where he married the king's daughter, is, like many other things, entirely his own invention: since in the history, the first introducing David

into Saul's family, is expressly attributed to Saul's own servants, who recommended David to him, as one well skilled in music, and otherwise an accomplished person, to divert his melancholy, chap. xvi. 17, 18. Nor is there the least hint given that Samuel had ever any thing to do in David's following advancement by Saul. Nor can it reasonably be supposed, since he never concerned himself with Saul, or his family afterwards to the day of his death, chap. xv. 35. It is well that Samuel died before Saul, or else our author would certainly have found some way to have charged his death upon that prophet, and would have contrived that Samuel should send him into the field of battle to be killed by the Philistines.

Our moral philosopher next falls upon David; and there is no person in his whole book that he seems to have a more peculiar spite and malice against than that great and heroic prince. I suppose, because he was an eminent prophet as well as king, and the penman of a very valuable part of the sacred writings, which hath been always had in great esteem.

He tells us, that 'The crown was cut off from Israel, and entailed upon Judah, by a long train of falsehoods, perjuries, dissimulations, ingratitude, treason, and at last open rebellion; and that David acted in opposition to all his former vows and protestations of loyalty, p. 299. And after having mentioned several sins and vices, such as open profane swearing, execrable curses, and most abominable lies, lusts, and whoredoms, breach of the most solemn oaths and alliances, cruelty, and blood-thirstiness, contrary to all the laws of nature and nations, he saith, that all these David himself had been most remarkable for. And that yet he is represented by the prophets, as a 'man after God's own heart,' and as having 'walked uprightly with the Lord, saving only in the case of Uriah the Hittite.' And he affirms, that 'the Jews, even in their most degenerate times, could not be charged with any vice, or moral wickedness, which had not been approved and justified in David, their great patron and exemplar,' pp. 323, 324. And again, that 'the prophets justify and extol David's character, and set up his example as worthy to be imitated by all future princes, though he had been the most bloody persecutor that ever had been known, and his whole life had been one continued scene of dissimulations, falsehood, lust, and cruelty. But his rooting out idolatry, and destroying idolaters by fire and sword wherever he came, made atonement for all, and canonized him as the great saint and idol both of the prophets and priests,' p. 334. Another reason for which he makes to be, that 'he at least doubled the revenues of the priests, to what they had been settled by Moses, and obliged the people to bring their sacrifices to Jerusalem; which was a servitude the other tribes could not bear, who only waited for a fair opportunity to break the yoke of Judah,' p. 300.

Such is the fate of this great prince. He complains in many of his psalms of false and calumnious tongues, that persecuted him whilst he was alive, with unjust and cruel reproache: and now at the distance of so many ages, the same spirit of envenomed malice

and bitterness appears against his memory, and shoots arrows against him, even bitter words. One would think by this author's representation of him, that he was one of the worst men that ever lived upon the earth, and hardly to be equalled by a Nero or a Domitian.

He first charges him with having obtained the crown, 'by a long train of falsehoods, perjuries, dissimulation, ingratitude, treason, and at last open rebellion,' p. 299. But the contrary of all this is so true, that nothing can possibly give us a higher idea of David's eminent and heroic virtues than his conduct towards Saul, under all the undeserved persecutions, the base and perfidious, the cruel and injurious treatment he received from that prince. He had done nothing to give Saul just offence; but had all along served him and his country with the utmost zeal and fidelity. All his fault was, that the glorious and heroic actions he performed, procured him the applause and admiration of the people. This raised Saul's envy and jealousy: and without any other provocation, he resolved upon his ruin, and took all the ways he could think of to effect it. And at last proceeded so far that he attempted to kill him with his own hand, even whilst he was attending upon him in his court, in obedience to his commands. And after seeming to be reconciled to him, when David had done him new and noble services, he sent messengers to his house to seize and slay him. See the 18th and 19th chapters of the first book of Samuel. Thus was this great and good man, that had done such eminent services to his king and country, forced to fly for his life, banished not only from the court, but, which affected him more, and of which he often makes the most pathetic complaints, the proofs of the excellent disposition of his mind, from the sanctuary of God, and the public solemnities of his worship. And when he had got a band of men about him for his defence, he never made the least attempt against Saul, nor did any act of violence to his countrymen. Jonathan, Saul's eldest son, though heir to the crown, and likely to be most prejudiced by David's succession, was so sensible of his innocence, that he pleaded for him with his father, 'Let not the king sin against his servant, against David, because he hath not sinned against thee, and because his work hath been to thee-ward very good.' And all along he continued to have a most exemplary friendship. 'He loved him as his own soul,' from an esteem and admiration of his virtues, and the harmony between great and noble minds. Twice David had it in his power to have slain Saul, when he came with an army to destroy him. But when earnestly solicited to it by those about him, rejected the motion with abhorrence. Saul himself was so affected with David's generosity and fidelity, that he acknowledged with tears that he had sinned, and that David had rewarded him good, whereas he had rewarded him evil. See the 24th and 26th chapters of the first book of Samuel. There cannot be a more illustrious proof than this is, of the noble and generous disposition of David's mind, and the eminent degree of heroic virtue to which he had arrived. He knew that he himself had been anointed king of Israel, according to the special

designation and appointment of God, by the hand of his prophet Samuel. A man less eminent for virtue and true greatness of mind than David was, would have been apt to think as those about him did, that this was an opportunity which Providence, had put into his hands, for getting rid of a man whom God had rejected, and who most unjustly persecuted him, and sought his life, and for investing him in the kingdom, to which he had been by divine appointment designed. But he was resolved to use no sinister means for obtaining the crown. He would wait till Providence should bring it about in its own way; but was determined to do nothing himself that was criminal to accomplish it. Upon the whole, David's conduct all along towards Saul, was incomparably noble, loyal, and virtuous; and yet our pretended moral philosopher, who would be thought an admirer of virtue, makes the worst representation of it imaginable; whilst at the same time he does not find the least fault with Saul, whose treatment of David was the most treacherous, unjust, and cruel in the world.*

When he came to the throne he had a long and glorious reign, and delivered his country from all its enemies and oppressors. Yet it doth not appear that any of his wars were undertaken, merely for the sake of dominion and conquest. With regard to most of them it is evident from the account given us concerning them, that he was not the aggressor, and there is reason to think so of all the rest. And although he had a great aversion to idolatry, yet, that 'he rooted out idolatry, and destroyed idolaters by fire and sword in all the nations round about him,' as this writer affirms, there is not the least hint given us in the whole history of his reign; nor, as far as appears, was any one of his wars undertaken on that account. Yea it is plain, he did maintain peace with some of his idolatrous neighbours, and was willing to have done so with others of them, if it had not been their own faults.† Nor is there any thing to support the malicious charge this writer brings against him, that he 'was the bloodiest persecutor that ever was known.'

He all along showed a true zeal for God, and for his pure worship, and a hearty concern for the interest of religion. He made very wise regulations, with regard to the various offices and employments of priests and Levites, for rendering them more useful, and that they might perform the work assigned them with greater order. But that he 'doubled their revenues as they had been settled by Moses' (as this writer supposes) there is not one word in the whole account that is given us of his reign. And indeed it would have been a hard thing for him to have doubled their revenues, if they had 'full twenty shillings in the pound, on all the lands of Israel before.' But it may not be amiss to observe on this occasion, that this reign, in which, according to our author,

* See a vindication of David, against some other charges brought against him, 'Answer to Christianity as old as the Creation, vol. ii. p. 542, 543.

† See concerning this above, p. 138. and p. 144.

both the prophets and priests met with great encouragement, was one of the most glorious that ever was in Israel. Never were the people in a more flourishing condition. Nor do we find that ever they were oppressed in the reign of David, as afterwards they were under that of Solomon. The justice and equity with which David governed is signified when we are told, that 'he executed judgment and justice unto all his people,' 2 Sam. viii. 15, or as it is expressed, Psal. lxxviii. 72, 'He fed them according to the integrity of his heart, and guided them by the skilfulness of his hands.' This writer represents it as a great hardship and servitude, that he 'obliged all the people to bring their sacrifices to Jerusalem, and to offer no where else.' But we read of no such constitution made by David, the temple at Jerusalem not being as yet built. The constitution obliging them to sacrifice at the place which the Lord should choose was as old as Moses, and what good men among the Israelites had always practised. Nor was this as he insinuates the yoke of servitude which the Israelites wanted to shake off, and which was the cause of their revolting from the house of David: but the heavy yoke of taxes and impositions which Solomon laid on them, and of which we find no complaint at all in the reign of David, under whom the people were very happy and flourishing.

The adultery and murder David was guilty of in the matter of Uriah was the greatest stain of his life and reign, and was indeed a most heinous crime and wickedness. And therefore there is a particular brand set upon it even where he is otherwise commended, 1 Kings xv. 5, it is said that 'David did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, and turned not aside from any thing that he commanded him all the days of his life, save only in the matter of Uriah the Hittite.' The design of which passage is not to signify, that it was the only fault he was ever guilty of, but that in no other instance did he presumptuously and 'wickedly depart from God,' to use his own expressions, Psal. xviii. 21. This was a crime of so heinous a nature, that it was in effect a revolting from God and from his law. And if he had not been recovered from it by a sincere and most exemplary repentance, he must have been regarded as one utterly abandoned and forsaken of God and all goodness. But so far is it from being true, that there was 'no kind of vice and moral wickedness, but what the prophets had approved and justified in David,' that it was the prophet Nathan that first came and charged him with this crime, with a noble boldness and freedom, and denounced the judgments of God against him on the account of it, and foretold the evils that should happen in his own family as a just punishment upon him for this his great wickedness. But then the exemplary repentance David expressed must always be remembered to his honour. His great sorrow and contrition of heart, and bitter remorse for his sins, and his deep humiliation before God (of which he hath left a lasting monument to all ages in the fifty-first psalm) and especially his unparalleled resignation to the divine will and exemplary submission to the afflicting hand of God under the calamities inflicted

upon him for his sin (of which we have wonderful instances, 2 Sam. xv. 25, 26; xvi. 10, 11,) these things show the great difference between him, and many other princes that have been guilty of the like crimes.

It is generally supposed, and very probable reasons might be brought to support that supposition, that it was in the interval between David's great sin in the matter of Uriah, and his being awakened to repentance by the lively reproofs of Nathan the prophet, whilst his heart was yet hardened in his sin, and stupefied with sensual pleasure, that he took Rabbah, and treated the Ammonites with that great severity of which we have an account, 2 Sam. xii. 29—31. It must be owned that they had given him the utmost provocation. This war on their part was base and unjust in the highest degree. They had begun it with a notorious infraction of the law of nations, and had carried it on by hiring and stirring up all the neighbouring nations against him, which had brought him into great dangers and difficulties. When therefore their chief city was taken by assault, this justified a very severe vengeance. And it was probably only those that had been the principal agents and forerunners of the war in the several cities that he treated with this severity. For we afterwards read that Shobi the son of Nahash of Rabbah of the children of Ammon, and who is probably supposed to have been the brother of Hanun the Ammonitish king that had so villainously treated his ambassadors, and began the war against him, came to assist him in his great distress, when fleeing from his son Absalom. From whence it may reasonably be concluded, that he had treated him and probably others of the Ammonites with great kindness, whilst he so severely punished the most guilty among them, and perhaps had made him king in his brother Hanun's stead.

That David sinned against God in numbering the people is plain from Scripture, though in what the precise nature of his sin consisted, we cannot well determine at this distance. But his ingenuous and humble confessing his sin before the Lord, and especially the great love and tender concern he showed for his country, in begging that the punishment might rather be inflicted upon himself and his family than upon the people, showed the excellent disposition of his mind as became a good king, and a father of his people.

Upon the whole with regard to the main course of his life, and the prevailing disposition of his mind, he appears to have been an excellent person. What his habitual temper and character was we may learn from his admirable Psalms, where we see his whole soul laid open, the workings of his heart without disguise. From thence it appears how much his mind was possessed with just and worthy sentiments of the Supreme Being, and under the influence of proper affections and dispositions towards him: how often he was employed in the affecting contemplations of God's glorious excellencies and perfections, and of his wonderful works of creation and providence: what delight he took in his worship, in praising, blessing, adoring him, and in meditating on his law, and on

his most pure and excellent precepts. No where can we observe nobler ardours of love to God, a more profound reverence of the Divine Majesty, a more entire submission to his authority and resignation to his will, and a more steady confidence in him under the greatest difficulties and adversities, joined with the most humbling sense of his own guilt and unworthiness. We may there see how much he was grieved for his sins; what just notions he had of morality and the necessity of an inward purity of soul; what a love of truth and goodness, and a hatred of falsehood and injustice; and how much it was the desire and endeavour of his soul to make a continual proficiency in goodness, piety, and virtue. These seem to have been the habitual governing dispositions of his mind. And accordingly we find him frequently appealing with the greatest solemnity to the heart-searching God concerning the integrity of his heart, and the purity of his intentions. And it is with regard to these excellent parts of his character that he is represented as a 'man after God's own heart,' as well as his fitness to serve the purposes of his providence. Common candour will oblige us not to give the worst turn to the actions of such a man; but rather to judge the most favourably concerning any actions of his that appear to us suspicious, being ready to suppose that they would appear to us in a different view, if we were acquainted with all the circumstances of the case. And where it was evident that he was guilty of great and real faults, the proper use to be made of them is to reflect on the weakness of human nature, and to put us upon a constant watchfulness over ourselves, and to make us sensible what need we stand in of being continually upon our guard against temptations, that had like to have proved the utter ruin of so excellent a man, and which cost him such bitter sorrow and repentance.

On this occasion I cannot pass by a remarkable passage which our author has in the beginning of his book, and which gives us a true taste of his spirit. After having observed that David was the great master of poetry and politeness in Israel, he tells us, that he 'made a jest of himself by dancing naked before the Lord among the daughters of Israel, and uncovering that which his modesty ought to have concealed. This was doubtless a merry action which he as merrily excused to his wife by ascribing it to his zeal for the Lord, and in the same humour resolved never to lie with her more, because she could not approve of his warm zeal for the Lord among the women.' 2 Sam. vi. 20—23. see p. 22.

But our pretended moral philosopher, who affects here to show his wit, only shows his own absurdity, and the immodesty and levity of his mind, as well as his virulent malice against a person of great merit. David, whom he calls the great master of politeness in Israel, had too much sense to be guilty of acting such a part as this on a most solemn religious occasion, and before all the heads of the tribes of Israel that were then convened, a part which, according to his representation of it, would scarce be borne, in a drunken frolic, and in the lowliest company.

Our author himself was so sensible of the injustice of this reflection, that though he puts it into the mouth of Philalethes his moral philosopher, whom he would pass upon us for a lover of truth and virtue, yet he makes his other dialogist Theophanes, whom he introduces to act the part of the christian Jew, tell him that 'this censure is extremely severe if not unjust, and that the place referred to might as 'well bear a more candid interpretation.' And yet so loth is he to part with it that he makes him at the same time say, that it 'may possibly bear that construction.' But it is evident from the chapter he refers to, 2 Sam. vi., that this passage cannot possibly bear the construction the moral philosopher puts upon it. Since in the 14th verse of that chapter, when we are told that 'David danced before the Lord,' it is at the same time expressly declared, that he 'was girded with a linen ephod.' And this is still more clearly and fully explained, 1 Chron. xv. 27. which relates to the same transaction. We are there informed that 'David was clothed with a robe of fine linen, and all the Levites that bare the ark, and the singers, &c. David had also upon him an ephod of linen.' Where it is evident that David had on him a linen robe, and over that an ephod which was a shorter garment girded over the other to keep it from flowing loose. After this manner the Levites were clothed on solemn occasions, as appears from this passage, and from 2 Chron. v. 12, 13. David on this occasion put off his kingly robes, and was clothed like one of the Levites. This with his dancing before the ark, though done purely from a religious motive and principle, was what disoblged Michal. She thought that David greatly demeaned himself, and acted much below the majesty of a king in what he did; and in her fret and pride used the most aggravating expressions she could think of, the more to expose the action, and represent it as unseemly and unworthy of him. David in answer to her was far from excusing himself in a merry way as this writer has it; but very seriously and with a just indignation at the unworthy representation she had made of his conduct, he put her in mind that God had chosen him before her father and all his house, to appoint him to be ruler over his people: that therefore he would 'play before the Lord,' that is, would rejoice and testify his thankfulness to God; and that if this were to be vile or to demean himself, he would do it yet more. For what she reproached him for, he accounted his honour. And then the text lets us know that 'Michal had no child to the day of her death:' her irreligious pride met with a just rebuke from God. She was from that day forward struck with barrenness, which in those days especially was accounted a very severe judgment.

This is more than sufficient to show the falsehood and injustice of our author's representation of this matter. But it may not be amiss to consider what a writer of quality has offered, from whose superior sense and politeness, much better things might be expected than from our pretended moral philosopher. He has thought fit to make a representation of this transaction, which though not so base and smutty as this writer's account of it, yet sets it in a very unfair and dishonourable light.

After having represented David as a hearty espouser of the merry devotion, he tells us, that 'the famous entry or high dance performed by him, after so conspicuous a manner, in the procession of the sacred coffer, shows that he was not ashamed of expressing any ecstacy of joy, or playsome humour, which was practised by the meanest of the priests or people on such an occasion.' See Characterist. vol. 3. p. 117. It is plain what ideas he intends to raise of this whole affair in the minds of the reader. 'Merry devotion, high dance, playsome humour, practised by the meanest of the people.' And in his notes at the bottom of the page he tells us, that 'though this dance was not performed quite naked (in which he is juster than our author) the dancers, it seems, were so slightly clothed, that in respect of modesty, they might as well have worn nothing: their nakedness appearing still by means of their high caperings, leaps, and violent attitudes, which were proper to that dance.' This noble writer gives us as particular a description of it as if he himself had been present, and had seen it performed, and was acquainted with the particular measures proper to that dance. And I think he would have done well to have informed us in what authentic memoirs we may find an account of it, or of the clothing they wore on such occasions; which he tells us was so slight, that in respect of modesty they might as well have wore nothing. But certain it is, that David was not so slightly clothed. He had on, as I have already shown, a linen robe, which in those countries was long, reaching to the feet; and over it had an ephod of linen girded about him, which were very decent garments, worn by the Levites in their ministrations on the most solemn occasions, especially when singing the praises of God. See 2 Chron. v. 12, 13.

But let us a little particularly consider the account that is given us of this famous entry, as he calls it, which we have described to us in chapters xv. and xvi. of the first book of Chronicles, that we may see whether it deserves to have such ridiculous ideas affixed to it. It appears that it was a very august assembly that was then convened. All the chief men of the nation were called and gathered together; the 'elders of Israel, and the captains over thousands.' The design was to bring up the ark of God to the place which David had prepared for it in Jerusalem. And though they had too just and worthy notions of the Deity to suppose that his presence was confined there, yet they regarded it with the utmost reverence as a sacred symbol of his more immediate presence. It is manifest from the account given us 1 Chron. xv. from the 15th to the 25th verse, that every thing was done in great order. Some of the Levites bare the ark as Moses had commanded; others of them were appointed to be singers, being divided into several classes under their proper masters, and had their several parts assigned them, some upon one musical instrument, some upon another, to sing sacred songs or hymns to the praise of God. And that noble form of thanksgiving and praise which we have, 1 Chron. xvi. from the 7th to the 37th verse, was given by David on this occasion. The Levites sung it, 'and all the people said, Amen, and praised the

Lord.' In that admirable hymn David excites the people to give thanks unto the Lord, to glory and rejoice in his holy name, and to remember and speak of his wonderful works. He first puts the people of Israel in mind of the particular obligations they were under to bless the Lord on the account of the great things he had done for them. And then with a noble ardour and enlargement of soul, calls upon all the nations in the world to form as it were one universal delightful concert in singing praises to God, and giving him the glory that is due to his great and most excellent name, whose unequalled majesty and perfections he extols as infinitely superior to all the idol-deities. And lastly, he calls upon the whole creation, the heavens, the earth, the sea, the woods, the fields, to break forth into a transport of divine joy and praise. And the whole concludes with again calling upon the people of Israel to 'give thanks unto the Lord for he is good, for his mercy endureth for ever;' and to pray to him to save and to deliver them; and to 'bless his holy name for ever' to which the whole assembly said, Amen.

This was the assembly, and this the occasion which is represented in so ridiculous a light, as if it were only a ludicrous gamesome mob. Immediately before the ark which was carried in solemn procession, king David walked with the Levites all around him ranked in their several orders, singing praises to God to solemn airs of divine music: whilst he himself 'danced with all his might,' i. e. with his best ability, or with all his heart, (as that phrase is sometimes used) to show the joy and exultation of his soul. And though I will not pretend, like this honourable writer, to tell particularly what kind of dance it was; yet this I dare be sure of, both from the solemnity of the occasion, and from David's own character, that there was nothing in it light or immodest. He certainly was a man of excellent sense, as appears from his admirable writings, which show the exalted notions he had of what was just and pure, and lovely and praise-worthy; he was a great and wise king, and too good a politician to expose himself by any light immodest behaviour on this occasion in the beginning of his reign, when the whole nation were assembled and witnesses of his conduct; and especially before the ark of God, whose presence inspired a profound reverence as well as joy, and more so at this time, considering what had so lately happened in the case of Uzzah. His soul was then filled with joy, but it was with a divine joy and exultation in the goodness of God; and the admirable hymn he composed on that occasion shows what noble and divine sentiments then possessed his mind, how far from any thing so mean, low, indecent, and trivial as they would put upon him.

Indeed, any one that considers the peculiar modesty and decency prescribed in the law of Moses to be observed in the divine worship; and what care was taken to shun whatsoever had the least appearance of any thing indecent or impure;* will see how incredibly

* See Exod. xx. 26, xxviii. 42, 43, to which may be added, Deut. xxiii. 12—14.

absurd it is to suppose, that David who was so well acquainted with the law, would before the ark of God dance naked, or so 'slightly clothed,' that in respect of modesty he might as well have wore nothing ;' or that the sacred dances used on such occasions, should be of such a nature as if they were contrived on purpose to uncover their nakedness. We find that in the latter times of the Jewish state a Roman soldier's exposing himself naked before the people at one of their sacred festivals, raised such a violent commotion among the Jews, that occasioned the death of thousands, and could hardly be appeased. Such an abhorrence had the whole nation of any thing that had the appearance of indecency and impurity in their worship, even at a time when they were sufficiently loose in their morals, see Josephus's *Antiq.* lib. 20.

This noble writer is pleased to represent David as 'a hearty encourager of the merry devotion.' And he had observed a little before, that under that constitution 'not only music, but even play and dance were of holy appointment and divine right.*' All the ridicule here arises from the idea now affixed to the words *play* and *dance* in our language. But it is unworthy of a man of learning to take advantage from modern customs and expressions to expose a custom among the ancients, that carried nothing of that idea of unseemliness and levity in divine worship which it doth at present. It appears that on the most solemn occasions some kind of dance as well as music was then made use of in their sacred exercises : 'Let them praise his name in the dance ; let them sing praises unto him with the timbrel and harp,' *Psal.* cxlix. 3 ; and again, *Psal.* cl. 4 : 'Praise him with the timbrel and dance, praise him with stringed instruments and organs.' What the measure of their dance, or what their music on such occasions, we cannot now pretend to explain. But if we may judge of the one or the other by the majesty, the dignity, the great and sublime sentiments contained in their divine songs, it had nothing in it light, effeminate, and vain, or that bordered on wantonness and impurity. All was noble, grand, manly, and divine.

What the last mentioned author farther adds, hath such a tendency to expose the spirit of prophecy, which is what we have been considering and vindicating, that I hope it will not be thought an useless digression to consider it. He leaves the curious reader 'to examine what relation this religious ecstasy and naked dance (viz. of David at the bringing in of the ark) had to the naked and processional prophecy,' *1 Sam.* xix. 23, 24, where prince, priest, and people prophesied in conjunction ; the prince himself being both of the itinerant and naked party. It appears that even before he was yet advanced to the throne, he had been seized with this prophesying spirit, errant, processional, and saltant, attended, as we find, with a sort of martial dance, performed in troops or companies,

* If this representation which this noble writer here gives of the Jewish religion be just, I do not see with what consistency he could say as he does, p. 116, 'That they had certainly in religion as in every thing else, the least good humour of any people in the world, is very apparent.'

with pipe and tabret accompanying the march, together with psaltery, harp, cornets, timbrels, and other variety of music; see 1 Sam. x. 5; xix. 23, 24; 2 Sam. vi. 5.

It happens that in none of the passages here referred to, there is the least mention of their dancing; though they are produced to prove the 'saltant spirit of prophecy.' But his own fruitful imagination or prejudices have enabled this ingenious author not only to discover that they danced, but to tell us what kind of dance it was. He has found that it was 'a sort of martial dance, performed in troops,' &c. I see nothing to prove this except their having instruments of music with them must pass for a proof. And yet these were no other than were afterwards used in the temple in the solemn acts of divine worship and praise. It is very probable, that if trumpets had been mentioned on this occasion, this would have been looked upon as a demonstration, and yet every body knows that a trumpet was often used among the Jews where nothing of a martial nature was intended; see Psal. lxxxi. 3, cl. 3. All that appears from that passage, 1 Sam. x. 5, is that there was a company of prophets coming down from the high place, where probably they had been offering sacrifice; and that they were singing praises to God at the sound of musical instruments; and that Saul suddenly transported us with a divine rapture joined with them in the sacred exercise, and broke forth into hymns of praise. For this seems to be the meaning of his prophesying with them, which is not there to be understood properly of foretelling things to come, but as it sometimes is in Scripture, of singing sacred hymns and songs with exultation and devotion. So we read, 1 Chron. xxv. 1—6, of persons who, according to the order of the king, were appointed to 'prophesy with harps, with psalteries and cymbals, to give thanks and to praise the Lord.' Where to 'prophesy, and to give thanks, and to praise the Lord,' are represented as the same thing. The prophesying mentioned, 1 Sam. xix. 20, 23, 24, which is the other passage referred to, is probably to be understood the same way. Saul had sent messengers to seize David upon hearing that he was at Naioth in Ramah with the prophet Samuel. When they came there they 'saw the company of the prophets prophesying, and Samuel standing as appointed over them.' They were probably all employed in celebrating the praises of God in noble elevated hymns and acts of devotion. And the messengers Saul sent by a special influence of divine providence caught the sacred transport. They were hereupon ravished as with a divine ecstasy, and joined with the prophets in solemn acts of adoration and praise. And so did the second and third party of messengers he sent after them. Then went Saul himself, probably full of rage, and with a resolution perhaps to destroy not only David but Samuel too, and the whole company of the prophets that were with him. For his destroying the town of Nob with the high-priest and all the priests that lived there, upon a very slight suspicion of their favouring David; and the attempt he made against the life of his own son, showed what in the rage of his fury and jealousy he was capable of. But it

pleased God so to order it, that he himself, before he came to Naioth, was seized by the way as with a prophetic transport. And he went on prophesying in the sense already explained till he came to the place where Samuel was. Thus he was disarmed of his bloody intention, and his rage and fury turned into praise and sacred ecstasy by a wonderful influence of God's Spirit upon him. And we are told that when he came to Naioth, 'he stripped off his clothes also,'* that is, he laid by his royal robes or military habiliments, and 'prophesied before Samuel.' He became himself, like one of the prophets he came to destroy, wholly taken up in praising and adoring God. And after he had done thus prophesying, 'he lay down naked all that day, and all that night;' not that he was without any thing at all to cover him, but he lay down divested of his robes or upper garments, and thus continued in a trance, or in a kind of ecstasy, all the remainder of that day and the night following. A manifest and remarkable proof, how much the greatest princes and all their purposes are in the hand of God. He that was so jealous of his royalty, which put him upon doing so many unjust and unwarrantable things, was now made as it were to unking himself, and lay aside the ensigns of his dignity and power, and was constrained by a higher hand to lie down without power, without royalty, unable to execute the purpose for which he came. In the mean time David had an opportunity given him to get far enough out of his reach. And if Saul, as is very probable, came with any bloody intentions against Samuel and the other prophets that were with him, and perhaps against his own messengers, this wonderful incident made such an impression upon him as caused him for that time to lay aside his cruel resolutions. Considered in this view this whole affair, though wonderful, and of an extraordinary nature, had nothing in it that can be proved to be unworthy of the wisdom of God. The ridicule here lies not in the thing itself considered in all its circumstances, but in the expressions this noble author, in his great command of words, is pleased to throw in upon this occasion, concerning the 'prophesying spirit, itinerant, errant, processional, and saltant,' and in the insinuations he gives that the prince, prophets, and people all danced naked without any thing to cover them. And it is as true that they all danced and prophesied naked on this occasion as that David did so in his 'famous entry.'

* The 'stripping of the clothes,' or 'laying aside the garments,' is often to be understood, not of throwing of all their vestments, but only the 'upper garment.' Thus we are told, that our Saviour, when he washed his disciples' feet, 'laid aside his garments,' or put off his clothes, not that he was absolutely naked, for it is added, that he 'girded himself,' John xiii. 4. And the word naked is sometimes used both in Scripture and other authors, where absolute nakedness is not intended, but only a person's being slightly clothed, or being without his upper garment, or his proper usual habit. So Michal represents David as having 'uncovered himself' because he had laid aside his royal robes, though he was far from being absolutely naked, as hath been shown.

CHAPTER X.

The author's farther invective against the prophets considered. His account of their pretended conspiracy against Solomon. The rending the kingdom of the ten tribes from the house of David, not owing to the intrigues of the prophets, but to the just judgment of God. The prophets, not the authors of the several civil wars and revolutions in the kingdom of Israel. The favourable account he gives of Ahab and Jezebel, and the other idolatrous princes as friends to toleration and liberty of conscience. The falsehood of this shown. His attempt to vindicate the persecution raised against the true prophets of the Lord. Concerning Elijah's character and conduct, and particularly concerning his causing Baal's prophets to be put to death at Mount Carmel. The case of Elisha's anointing Jehu to be king of Israel, with a commission to destroy the royal house of Ahab considered : as also his management with Hazael. The charge this writer brings against the prophets fomenting the wars between the two kingdoms of Israel and Judah, and at length occasioning the ruin of both, shown to be false and inconsistent.

OUR Moral Philosopher, after having represented the prophets as quiet and satisfied in the reign of David, proceeds to inform us of a conspiracy they formed against Solomon and his family on the account of his granting a general indulgence and toleration to all religions. It is under this idea that he thinks fit to represent his defection to idolatry in the latter part of his reign. He built high places himself to Moloch and Chemosh, and other idol deities, not so much out of policy as this writer would make us believe, as in compliance with his wives, swayed by effeminacy and a love of pleasure, which debases and corrupts the best understandings. This he did in express violation, not only of the fundamental laws of his country, as hath been already shown, but of the particular covenant or promise whereby David and his posterity held the crown ; which was upon condition of their continuing to walk in God's commandments and judgments, and adhering to his pure worship as David himself had done. Our author, indeed, affirms once and again that David took it to be an absolute promise to him and his posterity of an uninterrupted succession to the throne without any condition at all, see pp. 261, 286. But that David himself understood it otherwise is evident from his own express account of it, 1 Kings ii. 3, 4, and 1 Chron. xxviii. 6, 7, 9. And that Solomon had the same notion of it, appears from what he saith in his prayer at the dedication of the temple : ' Now, therefore, O Lord God of Israel, keep with thy servant David my father that which thou hast promised him, saying, There shall not fail thee a man in my sight to sit upon the throne of Israel ; yet so that thy children take heed in their way, to walk in my law as thou hast walked before me,' 2 Chron. vi. 16. Add to this, that God himself appeared unto Solomon, and promised him to establish the throne of his kingdom if he ' observed his statutes and judgments,' as David

his father had done; and on the other hand, threatened to destroy both kings and people, if they 'forsook his statutes and judgments, and served other gods, and worshipped them; and that he would 'root them out of that land, and destroy that house which was called by his name, and make them a bye-word, and an astonishment to all nations,' see 1 Kings ix. 4—10. It is therefore justly observed as an aggravation of Solomon's guilt, that his 'heart was turned from the Lord God of Israel which had appeared unto him twice, and had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods; but that he kept not that which the Lord commanded,' 1 Kings xi. 9, 10. This being the true state of the case, if God had absolutely deprived Solomon himself and all his posterity of the kingdom, he could not justly have complained of any thing but his own conduct, who had broken the conditions on which he knew it was originally granted to David and his family. But it pleased God to deal more tenderly with him. We are told that the Lord declared unto him, probably by some prophet who was sent to deliver that message, that because he had not kept his covenant and his statutes, the kingdom should be 'rent from his son,' and given to his servant, yet not entirely, but so that a part of it should still be reserved to his family, and that he himself should enjoy the whole of it during his own life-time;* see 1 Kings xi. 11—14. And accordingly the prophet Ahijah was sent in the name of God to promise to Jeroboam Solomon's servant the kingdom of the ten tribes; at the same time letting him know that it was the will of God that Solomon should possess the kingdom during his own life-time, and that his son also should have the kingdom of Judah continued to him. And this promise to Jeroboam was also conditional; that if he would 'hearken unto all that God commanded,' and would 'walk in his ways to keep his statutes and commandments as David had done, God would build him a sure house, as he did for David, and would give Israel unto him;' see 1 Kings xi. 29—38. This message, which the prophet Ahijah delivered by the divine command to Jeroboam, when they two were alone in the field, is what our author hath improved into a conspiracy of the prophets, whom he represents as very profound politicians, that had laid their projects deep for bringing about a new revolution in the state, though how they were to effect it, or how the prophets came to have such an interest among the tribes, as to be able to give ten tribes to one, and reserve two to another, he doth not inform us. However, he assures us, that 'Ahijah let Jeroboam into those secrets and deep designs of state;' and laid before him what was 'intended and projected' by the prophets

* Our author ascribes Solomon's being preserved in the possession of the kingdom during his life-time to his being strengthened by foreign alliances, among which he particularly mentions his alliance with Egypt; when it appears on the contrary, that Egypt, instead of giving solemn alliance, rather gave encouragement to his enemies, and was a harbour for disaffected persons, probably through envy and jealousy of Solomon's greatness. Thither fled Jeroboam when Solomon sought to slay him, and thither fled Hadad the Edomite, and both met with great countenance and assistance there.

against Solomon and his family; and that if he would be governed by them, and 'destroy all idolaters,' they would order matters so that he should have the crown. According to this account Jeroboam must have known that the whole was merely a contrivance of those politicians the prophets, and that there was nothing of extraordinary prediction or divine inspiration in the case. But it is certain Jeroboam himself was of another mind. He knew nothing of those prophetic secrets and 'deep designs of state' which our author is the first that has discovered to the world. For when his son Ahijah was sick, he desired his wife to disguise herself, and go to Shiloh to inquire about him, giving this reason for it: 'Behold there is Ahijah the prophet which told me that I should be king over this people, go to him, and he shall tell thee what shall become of the child,' 1 Kings xiv. 2, 3. Where it is evident that he looked upon Ahijah as a true prophet of God, extraordinarily inspired to foretell future events; and he mentions his having foretold that he should be king over Israel as a proof of it. And indeed his foretelling so clearly and expressly this extraordinary revolution in the days of Solomon, when there was so little likelihood of effecting it, and his foretelling with so much particularity that Jeroboam should reign over ten of the tribes and no more; and the exact accomplishment of it, contrary to all appearance, and which would have been prevented if Rehoboam had but behaved with common prudence, and had hearkened to the advice which the wise counsellors gave him; this showed that the prophet Ahijah was indeed sent of God, and that that whole affair, which it was impossible for any human sagacity to foresee, was ordered and over-ruled by his all-disposing providence, for accomplishing his own just and righteous judgments.

This ought to have engaged Jeroboam, who was convinced that Ahijah was sent of God, to have conformed himself strictly to the commands that were given him by that prophet, in the name of God, when he foretold his coming to the throne of Israel. But though Jeroboam knew that the kingdom was rent from Solomon, as a punishment for his idolatry, and that when it pleased God to promise the kingdom of Israel to himself, and to his posterity, it was on condition of 'walking in his ways,' and 'keeping his statutes and commandments,' yet in express contradiction to the divine law, he set up the calves at Dan and Bethel; not as this author represents it, from the friendly regard he had to toleration and liberty of conscience, but merely from a motive of worldly carnal policy; for fear that if the people had continued to go up to worship at Jerusalem, they should revolt to the family of David again, 1 Kings xii. 26—28. But this irreligious policy of his, through the just judgment of God, only served to hasten the ruin of his house, which it was designed to establish. The same prophet Ahijah, that had foretold his advancement to the throne of Israel, did also by divine appointment declare that Jeroboam's whole race and family should be cut off and destroyed; and at the same time he expressly foretold, that God 'would root up Israel out of the

good land which he gave to their fathers, and scatter them beyond the river,' 1 Kings xiv. 4. A clear evidence that he spake by divine inspiration, since he so clearly foretold an event which did not happen till some ages after. Jeroboam's son Nadab, and all his family was destroyed (as Ahijah had foretold, though it can hardly be supposed that that prophet, who was then blind and decrepid with age, could be capable of forming projects to effect it) by Baasha; and afterwards Baasha's son Elah, and all his house, were destroyed by Zimri; which event was also exactly foretold by the prophet Jehu, whilst Baasha was in all his prosperity. And then Zimri, within seven days after his usurping the throne, was destroyed by Omri, who after a civil war for some years, between him and Tibni, was established on the throne. Our author would fain lay all these commotions and revolutions to the charge of the prophets. He calls them 'revolutions in favour of religion,' and saith, that 'all this slaughter and bloodshed was for religion;' see pp. 310, 311. Though there is not the least proof that religion was so much as pretended by Baasha or Zimri, as the cause of their conspiracies. Nor indeed can it be supposed that they would pretend the setting up and worshipping the calves at Dan and Bethel to be the cause of their conspiracies, which they found no fault with, and practised themselves, both before and after their coming to the crown. There is not the least mention of the prophets in all these revolutions, any farther than that they had foretold them a considerable time before they happened. And if this must be allowed to be a proof of their having effected them, then the prophets may, with equal reason, be charged with being the authors of all the wonderful revolutions in the successive monarchies and empires of the world, which they distinctly foretold; which would be to attribute to them a kind of divinity, and sovereign dominion over the world and mankind. And at that rate also our Saviour must be charged with being the cause of Judas's treason, because he clearly foretold it.

Our author observes, that when an account is given of Zimri's violent death, within seven days after his mounting the throne, it is represented as a punishment upon him, not for the murder and treason he was guilty of, in murdering Elah and all his house, but only for 'his doing evil in the sight of the Lord, in walking in the way of Jeroboam, and in his sin, whereby he made Israel to sin,' 1 Kings xvi. 19. But had not the sacred historian mentioned his murder and treason just before, ver. 16—18, as the reason why all the people rose up against him, and besieged him in Tirzah, whereby he was compelled to burn himself in his palace? Is not this sufficiently declaring, that his murder and treason brought his destruction upon him? And though his treason is not again particularly mentioned in the nineteenth verse, among his evil doings, that brought upon him the divine judgments, but 'his walking in the ways of Jeroboam;' this is not designed to signify, that his imitating Jeroboam's idolatry was his only crime; for his 'treason that he wrought' is again taken notice of, in the verse immediately

following. But according to the stated order observed by the sacred historian, it is observed of him, as well as of the other kings of Israel, that he was engaged in the same course of political idolatry with his predecessors. And this was particularly proper to show, that it was not for any aversion he had to the sins and idolatry that Baasha's house was guilty of, that he rose up against them, but merely to gratify his own ambition and cruelty and lust of reigning. Thus it is observed, ver. 13 of that chapter where an account is given of the destruction of Baasha's family, that it was because of 'their sins, by which they made Israel to sin, in provoking the Lord God of Israel to anger with their vanities, or idols;' where their idolatry is mentioned as the cause of the ruin that befel them in God's righteous judgment. And yet that it was not the design of the sacred writer to insinuate that this was the only wickedness that exposed them to the divine vengeance is evident, since in the seventh verse of the same chapter Baasha's destroying the house of Jeroboam, which however just as from God, was unjust in him, and wholly owing to his own cruelty and ambition, is charged upon him as a crime, for which judgment was denounced against him and his family.

This writer proceeds next to the reign of Ahab, of whom and his queen Jezebel he speaks with great complacency, for no other reason that I can see, but because they are stigmatized in the Sacred Writings for their wickedness and idolatry, and because they killed the Lord's prophets. For it seems to be a constant rule with him, to do all he possibly can to vilify and blacken the best and brightest characters there spoken of: and if any one be there represented as wicked and idolatrous, this is sufficient to recommend him to the esteem of our pretended moral philosopher, who seems as solicitous to blanch over the crimes and vices of the one, as to sully and calumniate the virtues of the other.

Ahab and Jezebel not only built a house or temple to Baal, and maintained 450 prophets of Baal, and 400 prophets of the groves, in express breach and defiance of the fundamental laws and constitutions of Israel; but they barbarously persecuted the true worshippers of God, 'threw down his altars, and slew his prophets with the sword;' see 1 Kings xviii. 4, 13, xix. 10. Yet this writer, who all along would be thought such an enemy to persecution, and seems to make the whole of religion to consist in 'liberty of conscience,' and will scarce allow that God himself hath a right to punish idolatry, is not ashamed to stand up in defence of Ahab and Jezebel, for murdering the Lord's prophets; and even whilst he is giving an account of this, has the confidence to praise the idolatrous kings of Israel, for maintaining toleration and liberty of conscience, pp. 313, 314. All that I can make of this is, that in this author's opinion it was persecution not to tolerate the public worship of Baal, or to destroy his priests and altars, but it was no persecution to throw down God's altars, and to put his prophets to death. He seems highly to approve the scheme that 'Ahab laid to root out the prophets, and to establish some other religion more

friendly and beneficent to mankind,' by which I suppose he means the 'Baalitish idolatry,' p. 312. And after giving a very favourable account of that idolatry, and of the priests of Baal, whom he represents as friends to liberty and toleration, he affirms that 'No instance can be given throughout the whole history, where any of the kings charged with idolatry used any force or violence, to oblige any body to worship the calves, Baal, Ashteroth, &c., and that they never hindered any of their people that had a mind to go up to Jerusalem to worship God in the legal way, of which Tobit was one.'* And he denies that they are charged with enforcing 'idolatry by law,' pp. 313, 314. But are we not expressly told concerning Jehoram king of Judah, that 'he made high places in the mountains of Judah, and caused the inhabitants of Jerusalem to commit fornication (by which is evidently there meant idolatry), and compelled Judah thereto,' 2 Chron. xxi. 11? Can any thing be a more direct proof of what this writer with so much confidence denies? And this Jehoram probably did, in imitation of the kings of Israel, and particularly of the house of Ahab. For it is observed a little before, that 'he walked in the way of the kings of Israel, like as did the house of Ahab; for he had the daughter of Ahab to wife,' ver. 6. And the 'statutes of Omri,' who was Ahab's father, mentioned Micah vi. 16, cannot well be understood of any thing else than some laws for enforcing idolatry by the public authority. But need we go farther for a proof of the persecuting rage of some at least of the idolatrous kings, than the reign of Ahab, the very time this author fixes upon for extolling their lenity and indulgence? The persecution was so severe, that all public worship of the true God was entirely prohibited. And as many of his prophets as could be found, whose business it was to instruct the people in the true religion, were slain with the sword; so that Elijah thought he was left alone; and that there were no true worshippers of God left in Israel but himself: though God informs him that there were some thousands that had not fallen into the common idolatry, but still worshipped the true God in private, though they were not suffered to do it in a public way.

But our moral philosopher, in order to justify, as far as in him lies, the violence used by Ahab and Jezebel, tells us, 'that experience had evinced that it was impossible for the regal power and prophetic office to subsist together, and therefore Ahab ought to have put an end to this holy order, and thereby have cut off the occasion of more religious wars. And that Jezebel seemed to have had some appearance of natural justice in the scheme she laid for the destruction of the Lord's prophets; since it is certain that they

* That many pious persons of the ten tribes went up from time to time to worship at Jerusalem, we may well suppose; but this was not with the allowance of their kings, who set up the calves at Dan and Bethel on purpose to prevent it. Thus particularly we find that great numbers went from Israel to worship at Jerusalem in the days of Asa, but Baasha king of Israel was so far from allowing it, that he built Ramah 'to the intent that none might go out or come in to Asa king of Judah;' see 2 Chron. xv. 9, xvi. 1.

had greatly inflamed and excited the people to rebellion, and cut off one royal family after another for above two hundred years past on account of religion. And that she designed to exterminate them as enemies, not only to their own country, but to the common peace and tranquillity of the world,' pp. 312—314.

But it doth not appear that Jezebel had any inducement to do what she did but her zeal for Baal and his worship; or that either she or Ahab ever so much as pretended to charge the prophets with having been the authors of rebellions and insurrections among the people. This is entirely the fiction of this candid and righteous author, without any thing but his own malice against the prophets to support the accusation. And this is the way he hath found out to reconcile the practice of persecution with a pretended zeal against it. It is but charging persons with treason and rebellion against the state, and interpreting their faithful warnings against the public vices and idolatry, to be a design to stir up insurrections among the people, and then it is right to destroy them without being guilty of persecution at all. Thus he takes the methods that the worst of persecutors have always done: first, to blacken the characters of the good men they had a mind to destroy, and fix odious brands upon them as rebels and incendiaries, and then to use them cruelly, and massacre them; which is a double murder committed, upon their persons and reputations. Thus the apostles, the design of whose preaching was to 'turn men from darkness unto light,' from idolatry and vice to the pure worship of God, and the practice of righteousness, were represented as persons that 'turned the world upside down;' and the apostle Paul in particular was charged as a 'pestilent fellow,' and a 'mover of sedition.'

Our author seems to mention it with regret, that Ahab could not 'put an end to this holy order,' as he hoped to have done, 'because the prophets had still more interest and influence with the people than the kings,' p. 312. And that Jezebel, though she had cut off many of the prophets, found it 'impossible to root them out, whilst they had so much interest, and the people were resolved to protect them,' p. 314. This is said with a view to insinuate what power they had to raise insurrections and commotions among the people. But how absurd is it to talk of the mighty influence the prophets had over the people, at a time when the whole nation had generally fallen into idolatry in opposition to their instructions and admonitions, and the few that had kept themselves pure from it were scarce to be discerned, and durst not publicly show themselves. If the prophets 'had so much interest' with the people, and they were 'resolved to protect them,' how came Jezebel to have it in her power to destroy as many of them as she could find? For if any escaped, it was only owing to their being concealed in secret places, like those whom Obadiah fed with bread and water in a cave, or to their flying out of the country. It appears from the account we have of Elijah himself, the most eminent prophet of that time, that he lived for the most part during that reign in obscurity and retirement, in constant hazard of his life, persecuted

from place to place ; nor do we find him coming into places of public resort, but when he was sent upon extraordinary messages from God, which he delivered and discharged with an undaunted fortitude. The only instance that can be produced to show his power and influence over the people, is what this writer mentions, his procuring Baal's prophets to be slain when they were assembled together to Mount Carmel. But this was only the effect of a sudden strong impression that was then made upon the people, upon their seeing the signal miracle which was wrought before them all, and which gave them an illustrious proof upon a solemn contest, that he was a true prophet of God, and that the Lord Jehovah whose prophet he was, was the only true God. Under the influence of this present conviction they obeyed the directions he gave them to destroy those prophets who were then engaged in the very act of idolatry. This, though an extraordinary action, was very just, both as a retaliation for the destruction of the Lord's prophets who had been causelessly put to death by Jezebel, and probably at the instigation of these false prophets ; and because these persons were all of them notorious criminals, devoted to death by the fundamental laws of their constitution, which was of divine original and appointment.* To which was added at that time the special command and authority of God himself, who upon Elijah's prayer and solemn appeal to him before all the people, gave an illustrious attestation from heaven that Elijah was his servant, and that what he then did was ' according to his word,' that is, by commission from him ; see 1 Kings xviii. 36, &c. Ahab himself, who seems to have been present at this contest between Elijah and the prophets of Baal, was probably struck at that time with what he saw as much as the people, and therefore made no opposition to the slaying of Baal's prophets. And it plainly appears from the account there given us, that he believed what Elijah then assured him of, that God would immediately put an end to the grievous drought that had so long afflicted the whole country, and send a great quantity of rain, which accordingly upon Elijah's earnest prayer to God was accomplished that very day.

One would think that Elijah's interest with the people was now at the height, and that now, if ever, they should be ' resolved to protect him.' And yet so little was Jezebel apprehensive of this pretended influence of the prophets to raise insurrections and commotions, that as soon as she heard of what Elijah had done, she sent a peremptory message to him that she would have his life the very next day ; and he had no way of escaping her rage but by flying first into Judah, and then into the wilderness, alone and destitute of all human succour and protection.

Afterwards, indeed, we find him coming to Ahab again with a special message from God, and denouncing the most dreadful vengeance against him and his family for the murder of Naboth. An

* Besides the general law for punishing those with death that seduced the people to idolatry, there was a particular law which appointed that the prophet that should ' speak in the name of other gods,' should be put to death, Deut. xviii. 20.

execrable wickedness, contrived by Jezebel, and approved by Ahab, and which may let us into the true character of both. For what could be a more flagrant and deliberate wickedness, than first to suborn false witnesses against a good and innocent man, and to get him condemned for blasphemy against God, and treason against the king (which charge was as true as that which this writer advances against the prophets), and then destroy and murder him under that pretence, and probably his children with him, as may be gathered from 2 Kings ix. 26, and so seize his inheritance? It was on this occasion that Ahab, meeting Elijah, said to him, 'Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?' see 1 Kings xxi. 17—20. And he had once before called him 'the troubler of Israel,' chap. xviii. 17. Not that he intended to charge him with raising insurrections and commotions against the government, but he hated him for his faithful reproofs, and dreaded the judgments he denounced with an impartial zeal against him for his sins. The answer that Elijah returned to him on both those occasions is remarkable: he lets him know that it was he, by his own wickedness, that brought those evils both upon himself and upon the people. Compare 1 Kings xviii. 18, and chap. xxi. 20, &c., in which latter passage he plainly and expressly foretels the ruin that should befall Ahab and his family, and the principal circumstances of it, with a wonderful particularity, all which received an exact accomplishment. The effect this had upon Ahab, in the outward signs of repentance and humiliation it produced, though it did not effect a true repentance and amendment, but was a transient remorse that soon went off, showed the inward conviction he had that Elijah was a true prophet of the Lord extraordinarily sent and inspired by him, and the reverence he had for his piety, and inflexible righteousness and integrity. And indeed from the account that is given us in the history of Ahab, it seems very probable that at the latter end of his reign, though he did not cast off the worship of Baal which he continued in to the end of his life, yet he was also willing to keep up some outward form of worshipping the true God, and of showing a regard to his prophets, and did not so openly persecute them as he had done before. And accordingly, it is not improbable that he suffered some of the prophetic schools to be again opened; and was willing to have some about him under the character of the Lord's prophets, who yet should not prove troublesome to him by their reproofs. And accordingly, as some true prophets were suffered in the latter end of Ahab's reign, as we may gather from the instances of such prophets, 1 Kings xx. 13, 28, 35; so there were numbers of pretended ones that assumed that character; to pay their court to the king, and who took care to please and flatter him, and to prophesy as he would have them. Such were the four hundred that encouraged him to go up to Ramoth Gilead, and promised him victory and success. These were the prophets he caressed, whilst he hated Micaiah the true prophet of the Lord, and counted him his enemy, merely because he reproved him for his faults, and told him the plain truth, and did not flatter him as

the others did. Our author, indeed, would have those four hundred pass for true prophets of God, that he may the better charge them with conspiring Ahab's destruction. But this hath been already sufficiently exposed.

The next instance this writer mentions is the affair of Jehu's being anointed king of Israel, and destroying the whole house of Ahab. And this is the only instance that can be produced, of a prophet's expressly anointing a person to be king with a commission to destroy the king that then reigned and his family. The history represents this as done by the special command of God himself; but he will have it to be only a conspiracy of the prophets against the house of Ahab, merely to gratify their own spite and revenge without any divine commission at all, though they feigned it the better to execute their designs. This makes a vast difference in the cases. The true question therefore is, first, whether God himself had a right to transfer the crown from the house of Ahab, and to order that whole royal family to be extirpated. And next, what proof there is that the prophet had such a command or commission from God.

The first question admits of an easy decision. For not to urge that God, by virtue of his supreme and absolute dominion hath a sovereign right to transfer kingdoms from one family to another, and to dispose of men's lives, and can put an end to them when he pleases without injustice, even supposing them innocent: not to urge this, it is incontestable, that he hath a right to punish his creatures for their sins, in that way that seemeth most fit to his infinite wisdom and righteousness. And when particular persons or families have been remarkably wicked, all that own a providence must acknowledge that it is no unrighteous thing in God to inflict remarkable judgments or calamities upon them as a punishment for their crimes, even to their utter extirpation. Now the case we are considering is that of a very wicked family, in which there had been a succession of kings that had been guilty of many and great vices and crimes, and particularly of an open revolting from the worship of the true God to the worship of idols; and that in a nation that was peculiarly set apart and chosen above all other nations to maintain the worship of the Deity in a world overrun with polytheism and idolatry, and whose constitution and polity, which was of divine appointment, was established on the principle of worshipping the one only living and true God. These princes had not only broken through and endeavoured to subvert these fundamental laws of the state, and the original contract and covenant on which that community was founded, and by which their right to their country and all their privileges was suspended, but they had with the utmost cruelty persecuted and endeavoured to destroy those that stood up for the ancient laws and constitutions, and had compelled the people to violate them; and thus had shown themselves the greatest enemies to God, to the laws, and to their country, upon which they had brought many calamities by their wickedness. Now upon this view, will any say that it was unjust in God to de-

prive such a family of the royal power of which they had made so ill an use, and even utterly to destroy them? If he had cut them off by diseases, by pestilence, by thunder, or an immediate stroke from heaven, few would have pretended to dispute the justice of it. And if God hath a right to cut them off, he may do it in that way that seemeth to him most fit, and therefore may do it by the sword of others commissioned by him to destroy them, if this appears to him to be most proper to answer the ends intended in the punishment. If he had cut them off by an extraordinary disease or immediate stroke, this might have been attributed to chance, it would not have been so evident on what account this was inflicted. But his appointing one of another family to be king, with an express commission to extirpate that wicked race in a declared execution of the sentence that had been pronounced against them long before for their wickedness, tended to show both the new king and the people the great heinousness of those crimes, and what ruin it would bring upon them, if they should imitate that unhappy family in that idolatry and wickedness which had exposed them to such an exemplary vengeance. And if the succeeding kings and the people of Israel had made a just and wise improvement of this event, it might have prevented the ruin of both, and all the calamities that afterwards befel them in their final desolation and captivity. In which case it would have been apparent that this exemplary punishment on Ahab's wicked race was designed for the benefit of the whole: as the just punishment of wicked malefactors is fitted and designed to promote the general good of the community. And if it actually had not that effect, it was their own fault, who did not make that use of it they might and ought to have done. And if upon such a view it appears that the destruction of Ahab's family was entirely just as from God, then on supposition that he sent and commanded his prophet by his divine authority to anoint Jehu king with a commission to execute his righteous vengeance on that wicked family, there was nothing wrong in the prophet's conduct in delivering the message God sent him upon: on the contrary, it would have been wrong, and an act of rebellion and disobedience against God to have declined it.

But the question remains, what proof is there that God did indeed send the prophet to anoint Jehu, and that all this was done by the divine order and appointment? And of this, taking the whole account as it lies before us in the sacred history, there is clear and convincing evidence. As God had been pleased, in his great mercy, to raise up eminent prophets to Israel in the time of this their great degeneracy, in order to preserve the knowledge of the true religion among them, when they were in the utmost danger of utterly losing and forsaking it: so he gave those prophets the most convincing illustrious attestations of their divine mission, sufficient to have convinced kings and people that they were indeed extraordinarily sent and inspired of God. More and greater miracles were wrought by Elijah and Elisha in a few years, than had been done for several hundred years before, from the days of Moses

to that time. Thus it pleased God to order it in his great wisdom and goodness, because then there was greater need of them. With regard to Elijah, to give the greater weight to his prophetic mission, God having determined to punish that guilty people with a most grievous dearth and famine for their wickedness and idolatry, a punishment which had been threatened in that case in the law itself, Deut. xxviii. 23, so ordered it that it should be brought on at Elijah's word, and removed at his prayer. Upon a solemn appeal to heaven he gave a most illustrious testimony to him as his faithful prophet and servant, in the sight of the king and all the people at Mount Carmel. Two companies of men that were sent one after another to seize him, were at his word consumed by 'fire from heaven.' 'He raised the dead,' and was himself at length taken bodily in an extraordinary manner into heaven. Elisha, that succeeded him in the prophetic office, had his divine mission confirmed by no less extraordinary attestations. At his word the unwholesome waters and barren soil had new qualities given them. At his word the Syrian Naaman was healed of his leprosy, and his own servant, Gehazi, struck with it in a moment, as a punishment for his baseness and falsehood. He was enabled, as well as Elijah, 'to raise the dead,' which seems to be an act of dominion and power peculiar to God himself, the Lord of nature and governor of the world. He gave the most extraordinary proofs of a divine inspiration and supernatural knowledge, in his disclosing to the king of Israel the councils which the king of Syria took in his bed-chamber. At a time when the armies of three kings were ready to perish, he foretold both that immediately they should have abundance of water, of which they stood in the utmost need, and that they should obtain victory over their enemies, when there was no human appearance of either. When Samaria was besieged by a vast host of Syrians, and reduced to the extremity of distress by famine, and no human succour near, he expressly declared, in the name of God, that the next day there should be such a plenty of all things, that a lord that stood by thought it scarce possible to be effected, even if God should open the heavens, and pour down provisions upon them from thence. And he also foretold that that lord himself should see it, but should not eat of it. And both these things were literally fulfilled, which it was impossible for any human knowledge to foresee. With regard to the destruction of Ahab's family, Elijah had by divine inspiration expressly denounced it to Ahab himself many years before it happened, and had foretold Ahab's own death with this particular circumstance, that the 'dogs should lick his blood where that of Naboth had been shed.' It was also revealed to him that Jehu should be king over Israel near twenty years before it happened, and he was commanded to anoint him, that is, to cause him to be anointed; for he was not to do it immediately himself, since the time appointed for it in the divine providence was not yet come; but he was to appoint Elisha to do it, who was to succeed him in the prophetic office. Accordingly, when the season came which

God saw fit for executing the just sentence that had been denounced so long before, the prophet Elisha was put upon it by the same extraordinary divine impulse and authority by which he was enabled to work such astonishing miracles above all human power to perform, and to foretel things above the reach of man to foresee. And indeed, the circumstances of the affair itself, and the manner of bringing it about, showed that there was an extraordinary hand of God in it. Elisha only sent a person to call out Jehu on a sudden from the company where he was sitting, and anoint him king, and then the man that did it fled. Upon this Jehu was immediately, and as it were in a moment, acknowledged by all the captains and the whole army, though there does not appear to have been any previous concert, nor any steps taken to prepare matters for such a revolution. This is a most surprising event, and which must be ascribed to an extraordinary influence of divine providence. It was scarce possible to foresee in a human way that this would have had such an effect. It rather might have been thought that it would have exposed the prophet himself, and perhaps, to use our author's expressions, 'have endangered the whole order.' But the prophet Elisha, who was assured that it was from God, was not at all solicitous about the issue of it, since he very well knew what the event would be, without taking any of the measures or precautions that would have been necessary, if the affair had depended merely on the management of human policy. As to this writer's sneer, that the 'king, queen, and all the house of Ahab were most religiously murdered in the name of the Lord;' if Jehu had executed the sentence denounced against the house of Ahab, merely in obedience to the command of God, and not from a principle of private ambition or cruelty, it would have been no more a crime, nor to be accounted murder, than it is for a person commissioned by a just king or magistrate to put malefactors to death in execution of the righteous sentence pronounced against them.

Our author before this had represented the prophet Elisha's management with Hazael the chief captain of the king of Syria, as a remarkable proof that the prophets brought about their own predictions, by accomplishing in a natural way what they had resolved upon before, see pp. 306, 307. The account he gives of this matter is from the beginning to the end one entire misrepresentation, as any one will find that will compare it with the account given us in the place he himself refers to, 2 Kings viii. 7, &c. He supposes the present which Benhadad the king of Syria ordered Hazael to give to the prophet (the magnificence of which was such as became a king) to have been a bribe from Hazael himself, though he does not tell us what the bribe was given him for, or what could be Hazael's view in it. Was it in Elisha's power to set whomsoever he would on the throne of Syria too, as he would persuade us it was in the power of the prophets, by their interest and influence, to make whom they pleased kings of Israel? He represents it as if Elisha's telling Hazael that he should be king of Syria, was 'to show himself not ungrateful for what he had taken of the captain.'

But if the present had an influence upon him, it should rather have bribed him to declare in favour of the king, who had ordered that present to be given him, than of the captain who only delivered it to him from the king. The prophet showed the exactness of his foreknowledge and divine inspiration by the answer he gave to Hazael, whereby he let him know, that the king should not die of the disease, and yet that he should certainly die some other way: as accordingly he did by the hand of Hazael, who in all probability had already concerted measures for securing the crown to himself upon Benhadad's death, and had resolved to hasten his death. And the prophet here gives him to understand, that he was not ignorant of the design he had formed; and then proceeds to tell him what execrable cruelties he knew he would be guilty of against the people of Israel, when he should be king of Syria. This writer indeed thinks proper to represent it as if Hazael had at that time no design against his master's life or crown at all, but was put upon it by the prophet, who 'sent him away after having given him sufficient instructions what he was to do,' that is, that he was to murder his master, and seize the crown. And in order to account for the prophet's putting Hazael upon this murder and treason, he tells us, that it 'is plain that Elisha here put Hazael into a most effectual way to obtain the kingdom, in hopes that, having been indebted to him for the crown, he would favour his country, and put an end to the war against Israel.' And accordingly he represents him as having 'taken his vows and protestations, that if he should happen (i. e., if he should be king of Syria) he would favour Israel.' Thus he is willing for once to allow the prophet to have been a patriot, and a friend to his country, that he may bring him in for having a hand in the death of the king of Syria. But this is a piece of history entirely of the author's own making. For there is not a word of it in the account given us of this matter in the sacred records. Nor can any thing be more absurd than to suppose that the prophet 'put Hazael into the most effectual way to obtain the kingdom, in hopes that he would favour his country, and put an end to the war against Israel,' when he very well knew that Hazael would prove a greater plague to Israel than all the kings that had been before him. How far the prophet was from contributing to Hazael's advancement to the throne, is evident from the great sorrow and concern the prospect of it gave him. He wept to think of the cruel devastations that Hazael would make in Israel, and the calamities he would bring upon that people. 'I know,' says he, 'the evil thou wilt do unto the children of Israel,' &c. Our author here gives us a cast of his art, which may let us see what fair dealing we are to expect from him; for whereas the prophet saith, 'I know,' he represents it as if he had only said, 'I fear,' and had spoken of it as a thing of which he was uncertain. But he plainly speaks of it as of a thing which he was absolutely assured of by revelation from God himself: and this drew tears from the eyes of that good man and worthy patriot. All that can be concluded from the whole story is on the one hand, the

exactness of the prophet's foreknowledge, and his having the certain knowledge of future events extraordinarily communicated to him from God himself; and on the other hand, his great humanity and love to his country. And this is a manifest proof among many others that might be produced that the things predicted by the prophets were not of their own procuring, and that they did not merely foretel things with a view to take measures to accomplish what they had resolved upon before; though this writer most absurdly produces this very instance as a proof of it: but they foretold them, because they knew by divine inspiration they would certainly come to pass. Many of the things they foretold were things which were disagreeable to themselves, and which they would gladly have prevented, if it had depended upon their own choice, as no doubt Elisha would have done Hazael's advancement to the throne of Syria.

The same prophet Elisha gave a farther proof of his divine inspiration, in that, when his country was reduced to the extremest misery and distress, and seemed ruined beyond redress through the conquests and devastations made by Hazael and his successors, he expressly foretold when he was upon his death-bed, the wonderful change that would soon happen in affairs by the glorious victories of Joash king of Israel over the Syrians, and foretold precisely the number of victories he should obtain, viz., that he should vanquish the Syrians thrice. And I suppose this writer will scarce pretend, that in this case too the prophet took care to accomplish his own predictions in a natural way, and enabled the Israelites to beat the Syrians thrice after his own death. And here by the way I would observe, how far that brave prince Joash was from looking upon the prophets as the great enemies and disturbers of their country, and the authors of all the mischiefs and calamities that befel the state. He rather regarded them as the greatest defence and protection of the country by their excellent counsels, and by their prayers and prevalency with God, as appears from the lamentation he made over the dying prophet Elisha, the father and head of the prophets at that time. He wept over his face, and said, 'O my father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof,' 2 Kings xiii. 14—19. The very word that Elisha himself had used concerning the prophet Elijah when he was taken up into heaven.

The reign of Jeroboam that followed was a successful and glorious one. Our author takes notice of this, and after having observed that 'this king was as great an encourager of idolatry as any that had been before him,' (which is not true, for he only followed the sin of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, which consisted in worshipping the true God after a wrong manner, whereas the house of Ahab had introduced the worship of Baal, and the heathen deities, which was an express and open revolting from the God of Israel) he adds, that 'this makes it evident, that the toleration (he should have said the establishment, for this was really the case) of idolatry, had not been the real cause of the ruin and devasta-

tion of this country for above two hundred years back : ' as if Jeroboam's idolatry was the cause of his success. But all that can be gathered from Jeroboam's prosperity and success, which had been plainly foretold by the prophet Jonah, 2 Kings xiv. 25, is, that as the Israelites had been afflicted for their sins through the just judgment of God, so now it pleased him in his great mercy to give them a respite from their calamities, and to try what influence his goodness and indulgence would have upon them ; to which it is expressly ascribed, ver. 26, 27. But they made a wrong use of their prosperity : and it appears from the lively admonitions of the prophets, who lived at that time, that all manner of vice and wickedness abounded among them. And this their abusing the divine goodness, and being neither reclaimed by his mercies nor judgments to repentance, at last ended in their utter ruin. As to what this author remarks, that ' Jeroboam had restored the observation of all the sacrifices and festivals of Egypt ; ' there is nothing of this in the account given us of his reign. It is probable indeed that he continued the feasts which the first Jeroboam had appointed. But these seem only in imitation of those instituted in the law of Moses with a small variation. See 1 Kings xii. 32, 33. Accordingly it appears from the prophet Hosea, who prophesied in the days of Jeroboam the Second, that in Israel at that time they had their new moons and sabbath, and solemn feasts. He speaks of their wine-offerings and sacrifices to the Lord Jehovah ; and of the feast of the Lord, and solemn day as celebrated among them, Hos. ii. 4, 5, 11. And Amos, who prophesied at the same time, talks of their tithes and free-will offerings, their feast days, and solemn assemblies, Amos iv. 4, 5. I shall not examine the way our author takes to account for Jeroboam's victories over the Syrians : nor his chronology that within five or six years after this king's death, the Assyrians destroyed Damascus, whereas it might be plainly shown that it was above forty years after his death that this happened. The confusions and civil wars that followed the death of Jeroboam, he would gladly attribute to the intrigues of the prophets, though there is not one word or circumstance in the history that can afford the least pretence for such a suspicion.

After having laid the ruin and captivity of Israel to the charge of the prophets, though if the Israelites had complied with their advice and exhortations their ruin had been prevented ; he next takes notice of the bloody war between Israel and Judah, which he tells us lasted two hundred and sixty years, that is, during the whole time that the kingdom of Israel subsisted. And this also he represents as he had done all the rest, as a war carried on upon the account of religion, and endeavours to interest the prophets in it, whom he represents as doing all they could to restore the kingdom to the house of David, pp. 320, 321. But all that he here offereth is one continued misrepresentation. The war between Israel and Judah was so far from being perpetual and uninterrupted as he would have us to believe, that we have no account of any war between them from the days of Baasha and Asa to the time of Amaziah and

Joash, which was the space of above an hundred years. Nor was there any war again between them from that time till the reign of Ahaz, which was above fourscore years more. And whereas he represents the kings of Judah, or the house of David, as all along aggressors in the war, and as 'taking a merciless and outrageous method with Israel after the revolt,' the very contrary is true. For though Rehoboam at first levied a great army with a design to reduce Israel to his obedience, he desisted from it upon the representation made to him by the prophet Shemaiah, 2 Chron. xi. 4. And it is therefore probable that the war which was afterwards carried on between Jeroboam and him, and his son Abijah after him, was owing to Jeroboam's own ambition, who thought, as being much more powerful, to have wrested Judah out of the hands of the house of David. Baasha was the aggressor in the war between him and Asa, out of the jealousy he conceived against him, because many of the Israelites went up to Jerusalem to worship. The same may be observed concerning the war carried on between Israel and Judah in the days of Ahaz. Pekab king of Israel was the aggressor, and joined forces with the king of Syria. Vast numbers of the people of Judah were then taken captive, and used in the most merciless manner, till upon the lively representations made to the chief men of Israel by the prophet Oded, they dismissed them, and treated them with great humanity. See 2 Chron. xxviii. 9—15. From whence it appears how falsely he represents the prophets as all along fomenting the war between Israel and Judah. For as the prophets declared against Rehoboam's warring against Israel, so afterwards they equally declared against the cruelty the Israelites used against their brethren in Judah: and thus showed themselves true friends to both. And whereas he represents the kings of Judah at the instigation of the prophets as entering 'into an alliance first with the Syrians or Aramites, and then with the Assyrians in order to bring back the revolted tribes, and force them to a compliance, or else to root them out of the land;' it happens, that in both those cases the kings of Judah made those alliances, not to obtain dominion over Israel, but to defend themselves when invaded by Israel; as appears from the account given of Asa's alliance with the Syrians, 1 Kings xv. 17—19. And of Ahaz's alliance with the Assyrians, 2 Kings xvi. 5—9. And if those alliances, as he tells us, ended in the ruin both of Israel and Judah, the prophets are not chargeable with this, since they did not approve those alliances. And here, by the way, we may observe the great consistency of this writer, who p. 303, brings it as a charge against the prophets, that they weakened and destroyed their country by causing the kings that hearkened to their counsels to break all their alliances with the neighbouring nations, as not thinking it lawful to maintain any peace or friendship with idolaters: and yet pp. 321, 322, represents it as owing to the counsels of the prophets that the kings of Judah entered into alliances with the Syrians and Assyrians; and that these politics of the prophets occasioned the destruction of Israel and

Judah; when the truth is, neither of these is fairly represented. For on the one hand, the prophets never advised or approved the alliances he speaks of with the Syrians and Assyrians; and on the other hand, they never absolutely condemned all alliances with foreign nations,* nor urged them to break their alliances with them under pretence that they were idolaters. See in what strong terms the prophet Ezekiel represents the great guilt of king Zedekiah in breaking the oath and covenant he had made with the king of Babylon, and the judgments he denounces against him for it, Ezek. xvii. 12; see also 2 Chron. xxxvi. 13.

Thus have I gone through the author's long invective, the design of which is to represent the prophets as the great disturbers of their country, and the principal authors of all its miseries, and of its final ruin; and which for a mixture of false history, and malicious calumny, can hardly be paralleled.

CHAPTER XI.

His charge against the prophets that lived before the Assyrian captivity, that they declaimed only against idolatry, and not against the other vices and immoralities of the people. The falsehood of this shown. The excellent scheme of religion and morals taught by the ancient prophets. His pretence that the whole nation of the Jews from the time of Moses to Ezra were Sadducees or Deistical Materialists; and that they received the first notions of a future state from the Persian magi, examined. His account of the change introduced into the Jewish religion at that time shown to be groundless and absurd. A future state implied in the law, and all along believed among the people, and clearly intimated in the writings of the prophets. This proved from several passages.

THE remaining charges our pretended moral philosopher brings against the prophets will admit of an easy discussion. Though he represents it as the design of the prophetic institution to 'preach up moral righteousness,' and 'keep the people to the moral law,' yet he saith, that 'from David's rebellions,' as he calls it, 'to the Assyrian captivity, for the space of above three hundred and fifty years, it is wonderful to observe how little these ancient prophets declaimed against the vices and immoralities of the people.' And after having mentioned several heinous crimes and vices, he observes, that these are scarce taken notice of, and in the mean while, nothing in a manner is declared against but idolatry, and the necessity of fire and sword [urged] as the most proper and only effect-

* See concerning this what hath been observed above, p. 84.

tual means of rooting it out.' He is pleased indeed to add, that 'after the Assyrian captivity the few prophets that were left talked in another strain; and urged the necessity of not only abstaining from idolatry, but of a true national repentance and a strict regard to the moral law, and no reliance upon sacrifices and priestly absolutions. See pp. 323, 324.

One would wonder with what front this writer could pretend to advance such an assertion as this: since it is impossible to look into the prophetic writings, and not be convinced that the same spirit every where appears in all the prophets that lived before and after the Assyrian captivity, the same zeal against vice and wickedness, the same concern for the honour of God, and the interest of true religion and moral goodness. Hosea, Amos, and Micah incontestably lived and prophesied before the destruction of Samaria; and the carrying away Israel captive by the Assyrians; and they all expressly foretold that destruction and captivity, and that as a punishment, not only for their idolatry, but for their other immoralities and wickedness. They particularly mention swearing, lying, injustice, cruelty, bribery, covetousness, oppression of the poor, luxury, drunkenness, whoredom, adultery, &c. for which they reprove them with a noble zeal and impartial freedom, without respect of persons, or flattering the great men more than the meanest of the people. And it is observable that they inveigh more frequently against their other vices and crimes than against their idolatry itself, particularly the prophets Amos and Micah do so. And they urge them in the most pathetic manner to the practice of universal righteousness, justice, mercy, &c. and let them know that without this their sacrifices would be of no avail, and expressly declare the preference of moral duties to mere ritual observances.* Nor do they once insist upon that which he represents as the only thing they urged, viz. the necessity of fire and sword as the only proper and effectual means of rooting out idolatry. That eminent prophet Isaiah prophesied many years before the Assyrian captivity, though he also continued to prophesy after it, and the same spirit every where appears in all his prophecies. Every where doth he strongly reprove sins and vices of all kinds, and exhorteth to real repentance, and universal righteousness and true holiness in the most noble, and solemn, and pathetic manner. This sufficiently shows with how little regard to truth or decency this writer ventures to charge the prophets that lived before the Assyrian captivity, as declaring against nothing but idolatry. I shall not mention the prophets that lived after that time, particularly Jeremiah and Ezekiel, because the author himself owns, that they urged the necessity of a true national repentance, and a strict regard to the moral law. And indeed it is impossible there should be stronger declarations to this purpose, than are to be frequently met with in those pro-

* See for all this, Hos. iv. 1—3, 11; vi. 6, 8; vii. 1, 4, 5; x. 12; xii. 6. Amos ii. 6—8; iii. 10; iv. 1, 10—12; v. 14, 15, 21—24; vi. 3—6; viii. 4—8. Micah ii. 1, 2; iii. 2—4, 9—12; vi. 6—8, 10—13; vii. 2—6.

phetical writings. And yet afterwards, in the very same page where he seems to acquit the latter prophets of the charge he had advanced against the former, he really involves all the prophets in general in the same accusation. For he hath the confidence to tell us, that the principal cause of the great corruption of manners among the Jews after their return from the Babylonish captivity was owing to this, that 'they had never been told before of any thing but idolatry, as the cause of all their miseries and calamities hitherto; and that all manner of vices and moral wickedness had been approved and justified in David their great pattern and exemplar,' p. 328. An assertion as false as any thing in his whole book, and I think I need say no worse of it.

It is in the same spirit of calumny that he represents the prophets as requiring only 'an external obedience to the moral law, without regarding the principle from which it proceeded, or whether it was free or forced,' p. 334. To this I need only oppose what he himself acknowledgeth, that 'it may be proved from innumerable testimonies out of the law and the prophets, that an inward spiritual principle of obedience as necessary to a state of true religion and virtue, was all along understood and insisted on during the legal economy,' p. 34. And whereas in the passage above cited he goes on to tell us, that 'mortification and self-denial, and a faith which can support men under adversity and above the world, an inward purity of the heart and affections, and the practice of universal benevolence and charity, moral truth, righteousness and peace with all men, from the prospect of immortality and a future state of spiritual happiness to be enjoyed with God and the angels; this is a religion which those holy men the Naioth prophets never understood or taught:' it is certain that no where is the necessity of an inward purity of the heart and affections, or of moral truth and righteousness more strongly inculcated than in those admirable writings, no where can be found nobler expressions of a lively faith and trust in God, even under the greatest afflictions and adversities, and of holy love to him, and zeal for his glory. A merciful, a kind and charitable disposition of mind towards our neighbour, is there also frequently urged as absolutely necessary to the character of a good man, and as an essential part of true religion.* And when all people and nations are so often called upon to bless and praise the Lord, and to rejoice in him: when so earnest a desire is frequently expressed, that God's way might be known upon earth, and his salvation unto all nations; when the happiness of the Messiah's kingdom is so often described by its being a state of universal benevolence and peace, and mutual good will among mankind, and Gentiles as well as Jews are represented as sharing in the glorious benefits of it; I cannot but think this discovers in the prophets, a spirit of extensive benevolence,

* See the whole lviii. chapter of Isaiah, Psal. xxxvii. 21, 26; cxii. 4; Hos. vi. 6; Mic. vi. 8; Dan. iv. 27; Zech. vii. 9.

having in view the universal happiness and good of all mankind, and not merely confined to that of their own nation.

What he mentions concerning the prospect of immortality, and a future state of happiness, as a thing which the prophets never understood or taught, deserves a more particular consideration, as it is a charge he frequently brings against the whole Old Testament dispensation. He expressly declares, that before the time of Esdras, which was after the return from the Babylonish captivity, no Jewish writer, priest, or prophet, had ever mentioned a word of a 'general resurrection and a judgment of good and bad men, and a consequent future state of rewards and punishments,' p. 46. And that 'from the days of Moses till the time of Ezra, which was a period of about eleven hundred years, the whole nation of the Jews had been deistical materialists or Sadducees, and had been never known to suffer any thing for religion, because they had no future expectation that could make them amends for it. And that it might be easily proved that the Sadducees in the days of Christ and the apostles, were not a new or modern sect lately sprung up among them, but the true remains of the ancient Jews.' And he had observed a little before, that 'it was in the time of the Persian empire that a great change of religion was introduced among the Jews, by which they quitted their idolatry, and embraced the doctrines of the immortality of the soul, and the resurrection of the body, a final judgment, and a future state of rewards and punishments for good and bad men. And that after the Jews had received these doctrines from the Persian magians, they never relapsed into idolatry more, but suffered martyrdom for their religion with the same constancy, zeal, and firmness, that the Christians have done since.' pp. 440, 441.

This pretended account of the great change of religion among the Jews after the time of Ezra, and which was owing to their conversation with the Persian magi, only shows that some persons are willing to take up with any scheme, how absurd soever, that seems to favour the prejudices they have received against the holy Scriptures. It is true indeed that the body of the Jewish nation showed a more general aversion to idolatry in the times after their return from the Babylonish captivity, in which they had suffered so much for this and their other crimes than ever they had done before. But can any thing be more absurd than to suppose, that they learned this aversion to idolatry from the idolatrous Chaldeans, or from the Persian magi, the adorers of the sun and of fire? and whereas he takes upon him to affirm, that from the days of Moses till the time of Ezra, none of the Jews had ever been known to suffer any thing for their religion; not to mention several of the prophets, who in defence of the true religion and the law of God, exposed themselves to the bitterest persecutions, and even to death itself; the instances of Shadrach, Meshech, and Abednego, and of Daniel, are illustrious examples of constancy in religion in opposition to all the terrors of this world, at the same time that the wise men of Babylon complied with the idolatrous

injunctions. As to his insinuations concerning the Jews learning religion from the Persian magi, if a change of religion must be admitted among the Jews, it ought with much greater probability be supposed that they learned it from the Babylonians than from the Persians; since during their long captivity in Babylon, the body of the people had almost forgotten their ancient language, and had accustomed themselves to that of the Chaldeans. But it is certain that they did not adopt their religion, which was idolatry, on the account of which, as well as for injustice, cruelty, and tyranny, judgment is denounced against Babylon by the prophets. When the Jews returned from Babylon, in the first year of Cyrus, under the conduct of Zerubbabel and Joshua, which was before they could be supposed to have much commerce with the Persians, who had but just conquered the Babylonish empire, they immediately upon their return set up their old religion, according to the law of Moses. And afterwards Ezra and Nehemiah, who came by the allowance of the Persian emperors, did not reform the Jewish religion and polity, by bringing it to the model of other countries, but by bringing all things as near as possible to the original constitution as appointed in that law, and they vigorously opposed and censured every deviation from it. And as to those of the Jews that did not return to Judea, but continued still dispersed throughout the several provinces of the Persian empire, it appears, that far from adopting the Persian religion as their own, they strictly adhered to their own particular laws and customs: and from hence it was that Haman took occasion to expose them to the public hatred, and procured a decree for their extirpation. *Esth.* iii. 8.

Any one that considers the most remarkable and distinguishing principles of the Persian magi, will soon observe a vast difference between them and the Jews. The main principle of the magian religion was the acknowledgment of two principles, the one good and the other evil, both of which they acknowledged to be gods, and to both they paid their adorations: which was entirely contrary to the very fundamental principle of the Jewish religion. According to Dr. Hyde's own account of the ancient Persians, which this writer refers to, they fell very early into Sabiism, or worshipping the host of heaven, and though he supposes Abraham to have reformed this, he owns that after a time they relapsed into it again. Though they did not entirely lose the knowledge of the true God, yet they paid their adorations to the heavenly luminaries. And how expressly this is prohibited in the law of Moses and in the prophetic writings, none that ever read the Scriptures needs to be informed. And when Magism was introduced among the Persians, still they worshipped the sun and the fire. And something like this we read of among the Jews before the Babylonish captivity. Some of their idolatrous kings had 'priests that burnt incense to the sun;' and we read of horses which they had given or dedicated to the sun, which that great reforming king Josiah destroyed. *2 Kings* xxiii. 5, 11. And the prophet Ezekiel, among other abominations, represented to him in the prophetic

vision as practised at Jerusalem, even by the elders of the people, a little before the utter destruction of the city and temple by the 'Chaldeans, saw some with their backs towards the temple of the Lord, and their faces towards the east, worshipping the sun toward the east.' Ezek. viii. 16. But this as well as all other kinds of idolatrous worship after their return from the captivity, was held in abomination by the Jews; though one should think, if they had learned their religion from the Persian magi, they should rather have been confirmed in it. Add to this, that another thing remarkable among the Persians was, that they sacrificed on hills and high places in the open air, and had no temples,* whereas the Jews were not allowed to offer sacrifices on high places, or any where but at the temple at Jerusalem, and showed a remarkable zeal for rebuilding that temple, after their return from the captivity notwithstanding all the opposition they met with in that undertaking.

There is no likelihood therefore, that the Jews should have learned their religion from the Persian magi, to some of whose main principles of religion they had the utmost aversion. Indeed if the account Dr. Prideaux gives of Zoroaster, and the reformation wrought by him in the religion of the Magians, may be depended on, it seems evident that the very reverse of our author's supposition is true; and that instead of the Jews learning their religion from the Persian magi, or Zoroaster, he derived from the Jews the reformatory alterations he wrought in the ancient religion of the Magians, see *Prid. Connect.* part i. book iv. And if it be true that the 'Persian magi had received and taught the doctrines of the unity of God, a resurrection from the dead, and a future state of rewards and punishments, for many hundred years before Zoroaster (whom our author supposes to have been contemporary with Esdras) who did not in these cases pretend to introduce any new religion, but to restore the true old Abrahamic religion, which had been in some respects corrupted;' all which he thinks Dr. Hyde, in his book *De Religione veterum Persarum*, makes very clear, see pp. 348, 349. If this be so, it may very justly be supposed that this Abrahamic religion was much better preserved amongst the Jews, the direct descendants from Abraham, whom they looked upon as the great founder of their nation, and for whose memory they always had the profoundest veneration.

This writer indeed takes upon him to affirm, that the Jews were entire strangers to the doctrines of a resurrection, the immortality of the soul, and a future judgment, till after the time of Ezra; that the whole nation had been till then deistical materialists or Sadducees; and that the Sadducees in our Saviour's time were not a modern sect, but the true remains of the ancient Jews, who stuck to the principles of their great lawgiver Moses. Whereas

* I know Dr. Prideaux, in his account of Zoroaster, supposes that he caused temples to be built, whereas the Persians had none before; but in this he seems to be mistaken, since there are express authorities to show, that long after the time of Zoroaster the Persians were without temples, as Mr. Moyle has I think clearly proved.

the very contrary to this is true, that the Sadducees were a modern sect never known among the Jews, till long after the days of Ezra, till then the immortality of the soul, the existence of spirits, and a future state of retributions, were universally believed in that nation. They were indeed little better than a sect of Jewish Epicureans, and always few in number, and of ill reputation with the body of that nation; and therefore they were wont to dissemble their principles, whenever they had a mind to make an interest with the people.

I had already occasion to observe, that the immortality of the soul and a future state was a doctrine not denied or controverted when the law of Moses was given, which may be supposed to be one reason why it is not there so expressly asserted. But it is all along supposed and implied in that law. The noble account Moses gives of man's original formation, that he was made in the image of God himself, and after his likeness, which tends to give us high notions of his original dignity; his representing the body of man as formed out of the dust of the ground, but giving a different account of the soul, whose noble vital active nature he signifies by calling it the breath of life, which he represents as immediately inspired by God himself into the body duly organized: the frequent mention he makes of the apparition of angels (which is scarce reconcileable to the doctrine of the Sadducees, who did not acknowledge either angels or spirits, Acts xxiii. 8), and of the intercourse between men and the inhabitants of the heavenly world; his account of Enoch's having walked with God, and that he was not for God took him; which must be understood of his taking him to another state, as a reward of his distinguished piety; and is by the apostle justly interpreted of God's translating him that he should not see death, Heb. xi. 5. Another instance of which there afterwards was in Elijah: his representing the most eminent patriarchs and favourites of God, as confessing themselves to be strangers and sojourners here on earth, and calling this their present life the 'few and evil days of their pilgrimage;' from whence it is natural to infer that they did not expect their recompence here, but 'looked for a better country, that is an heavenly:' the account he gives of the covenant God made with Abraham, whereby he engaged to be a God unto him, his shield, and his exceeding great reward, which must have a farther view than this present state, since Abraham, who for the most part lived a wandering unsettled life as a sojourner in the land of Canaan, met with no reward here that could justly answer the import of so glorious a covenant and promise: his representing God as describing himself under the character of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and thus challenging a special relation to them as their God and portion, some ages after those patriarchs were dead, which plainly shows that they were not utterly lost and extinguished in the grave; since he is 'not the God of the dead but of the living;' from whence our Saviour draws an argument against the Sadducees, to prove the resurrection and a future state: the account Moses gives

of the hopes and expectations of dying Jacob, when just before his death, in the midst of his prophetic benedictions to his sons, he breaks forth into that exclamation expressive of his hope and his desire, 'I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord.' His representing Balaam expressing his desire, that he might 'die the death of the righteous, and that his last end might be like his:' all these are plain intimations of the belief of a future state; that Moses himself believed it, and that it was the faith of the ancient patriarchs. The existence of good and evil spirits separate from man, is evidently implied in several passages in the books of Moses; and that this was a notion that then obtained generally among the people, may be concluded from the prohibitions there made not to consult with those that had familiar spirits, or with necromancers, i. e. those that pretended to consult the dead, and to raise their ghosts to inquire by; like the woman at Endor, of whom we have an account 1 Sam. xxviii. 3, 7. And by the way I would observe, that when Saul so earnestly desired to have the soul of Samuel raised that he might enquire of him, this plainly showed the persuasion he had of the existence of the souls of men in a separate state after death, and which was no doubt the common belief in that time. The very notion which all along obtained among the Jews of prophets and inspired persons, who had intercourse with God and angels, and were enabled to foretell future events, plainly shows the belief they had of an invisible world of spirits. Hence the Epicureans, who denied the immortality of the soul and a future state, laughed at all these things. And doth not this writer himself tell us, that the common people among the Jews believed the prophets 'had an immediate and free conversation with God, angels, and departed souls, from whom they were supposed to receive all their superior knowledge and intelligence.' p. 284. And how this is consistent with his asserting the whole nation to have been all this time Deistical Materialists, or Sadducees, who believed there were no angels or departed souls, is hard to conceive.

Not to insist on that noble passage in Job, where he speaks so clearly of the resurrection of the body; for that it relates to the resurrection of the body, and cannot without great constraint upon the words be applied to any thing else, might I think be clearly shown; and if Job, who was of the posterity of Abraham, and lived in Arabia, had such notions of the resurrection and a future state, we may well suppose that the Israelites were not strangers to it: I say not to insist upon this, there are many passages in the Psalms and other prophetic writings, which plainly show this. David, speaking of ungodly men, represents them as the 'men of this world who have their portion in this life,' in opposition to whom he declares his own hope that he should 'behold the face of God in righteousness,' which is the very expression made use of in the New Testament, to signify the spiritual happiness of the saints in a future state; and that when he should awake (which may be justly understood of rising again from the dead, 'since death is so usually represented under the notion of a sleep') he should 'be satisfied with his

likeness,' Psal. xvii. 14, 15. Those words of his, 'Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine holy one to see corruption,' show David's own belief of a resurrection and a future state, though they ultimately relate to the Messiah, in whom alone this was properly and literally accomplished. And when it is added, that in God's 'presence is fulness of joy,' and at 'his right hand there are pleasures for evermore,' Psal. xvi. 10, 11. This is an excellent and comprehensive description of the happiness reserved for good men in the heavenly state. And when the Psalmist David represents God as having 'established his throne in the heavens,' and gives that noble account of the blessed angels there, that 'they excel in strength, and do his commandments, hearkening to the voice of his word,' and in a divine rapture calls upon them to 'bless the Lord,' Psal. ciii. 19—21. This shows the notion good men then had of those good and holy spirits, which is absolutely inconsistent with their being Materialists or Sadducees, and what they thought of the perfection of happiness and purity in the heavenly world: and is no obscure intimation that they had the same hopes, for substance, of the heavenly Jerusalem, and 'an innumerable company of angels there,' which the saints express under the New Testament. See Heb. xii. 22. In Psalm xlix. ver. 14, 15, it is plainly signified, that how rich or prosperous soever the wicked might be here on earth, yet they must be laid in the grave, and the upright should have dominion over them; but that God would redeem his faithful servants from the power of the grave, and would receive them to himself. The prophet Asaph when perplexed with the thoughts of the worldly prosperity of the wicked, declared that he was satisfied by 'entering into the sanctuary of God,' and considering the destruction that should come upon them: and for his own part he expresseth his desire and hope in this excellent manner, 'Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory. Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee. My flesh and my heart faileth; but God is the strength of my heart and my portion for ever,' see Psalm lxxiii. When the prophet Habbakuk makes that noble declaration, 'Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vine; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stall; yet will I rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation;' as it shows with what truth this writer affirms, that 'none of the prophets ever understood or taught a faith which can support men under adversity, and above the world; so it shows that they did not look upon the reward they expected as consisting merely in temporal prosperity, or a worldly affluence; that their hopes were of a higher and nobler nature, not merely confined within the narrow limits of this present life, which could not possibly furnish such glorious conceptions, or lay a foundation for such eminent acts of faith and spiritual joy, under the greatest outward difficulties and distresses.

It is expressly declared, that 'the wicked is driven away in his

wickedness, but the righteous hath hope in his death,' Prov. xiv. 32. And that at death the dust, that is the body, 'shall return to earth as it was, but the spirit shall return unto God that gave it,' Eccles. xii. 7. Sinners are called upon to consider amidst their vicious pleasures and excesses, that 'for all these things God will bring them into judgment,' Eccles. xi. 9. And it is expressly asserted, that 'God will bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil,' Eccles. xii. 14. And yet this writer hath the confidence to affirm, that no Jewish writer, before the days of Ezra, ever mentioned a word of a future judgment. The prophet Isaiah after having observed, that 'the righteous perisheth, and no man layeth it to heart; and merciful men are taken away, none considering that the righteous is taken away from the evil to come,' immediately adds, He, i. e. the righteous man, whom he supposes to have perished or died, and to be taken away from this world, and the evil of it, 'shall enter into peace.' Which can only be understood of a state of rest and happiness, which is the usual meaning of the word peace in the sacred writings. And he there describes that future happiness in metaphorical expressions, by saying they, i. e. the righteous and merciful men, whom he represents as having separated out of this life, 'shall rest in their beds, each one walking in his uprightness,' Isa. lvii. 1, 2. Those words of the same prophet are justly looked upon as containing at least a manifest allusion to the resurrection of the dead; 'Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise: Awake and sing ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out her dead,' Isa. xxvi. 19. 'To which may be added those words of Hosea, 'I will ransom them from the power of the grave: I will redeem them from death. O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction,' Hos. xiii. 14. But it is still more clearly expressed in the book of Daniel, 'Many that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt,' Dan. xii. 2. When in stating the justice and equity of the divine proceedings, in chap. xviii. of Ezekiel, God is represented as declaring with the greatest solemnity, as a matter of immutable and eternal certainty, concerning every man whatsoever that should persist in a course of sin and disobedience, that he should surely die; and concerning every good and righteous man, that he shall surely live, he should not die; it is evident this cannot be understood merely of temporal life and death, or of worldly prosperity and adversity, since it is undeniable that both these in many instances equally befall the righteous and the wicked; as the wise man observes, Eccles. ix. 1, 2, and must therefore be understood to extend to a state of happiness or misery, after this life is at an end.

This may suffice to show the falsehood and injustice of that charge which this writer brings against Moses and the prophets, and the whole Jewish nation, till the days of Ezra, that they were Deistical Materialists or Sadducees. And now I have gone

through the several objections scattered in different parts of his book against the Old Testament; and perhaps I shall be thought to have examined them more particularly than they deserve. I now proceed to what he offers with a view to destroy the authority of the New Testament.

CHAPTER XII.

A transition to the Moral Philosopher's objections against the New Testament. Though he pretends a very high respect for our blessed Saviour, yet he insinuates several reflections upon his conduct and character. Those reflections shown to be groundless and unjust. Our Lord did not comply with the prejudices of the people in any thing contrary to truth, or to the honour of God. He was far from assuming to be a temporal prince, yet he all along claimed to be the Messiah promised and foretold by the prophets. The author's pretence that he renounced that character at his death, shown to be false. The Messiah spoken of by the prophets, was not merely to be a national Deliverer of the Jews, nor were the benefits of his kingdom to be confined to that nation only, but to be extended to the Gentiles. This shown from the prophecies themselves. The attestation given to Christ's divine mission, by the prophecies of the Old Testament, considered and vindicated.

IN many of the objections that have been hitherto considered, we have had plain proofs of the malice and disingenuity of this writer; but in what remains with regard to the New Testament, there is still greater reason to complain of his conduct. As to the Old Testament, he acts the part of an open enemy, though an enemy that hath little regard to any thing that can be called fair or honourable, and who seems to govern himself by that maxim, '*Dolus an virtus quis in hoste requirat?*' But when he speaks of the gospel revelation, he frequently puts on the appearance of a friend. He affects to speak honourably of Jesus Christ, and of the religion he taught. He expressly declares himself to be a 'Christian on the foot of the New Testament,' p. 359, and talks in pretty strong terms of the signal advantages of the gospel revelation, and seems to blame those that do not set a due value upon it. In the beginning of this book I have quoted a long and remarkable passage to this purpose to which I refer the reader; and several other passages might be produced that are no less strong and express. See particularly pp, 358, 359, 392, 394, 411. But all this is only the better to carry on his design against Christianity, by seeming to speak favourably of it whilst he really uses his utmost efforts to subvert it. This will be evident to any one that considers the bare reflections he insinuates upon our blessed Lord himself: his more open attempts against the character of the

apostles, and against the proofs they brought of their divine mission; especially those taken from the extraordinary gift and powers of the Holy Ghost in the apostolical age: the account he gives of the false and absurd Jewish gospel, which he pretends they all preached except the apostle Paul, and of the great differences among them about points of the highest consequence and importance: the endeavours he uses to destroy the credit of the whole canon of the New Testament, and to show that it is not to be depended on for a right account either of doctrines or facts: besides the pains he takes to misrepresent and expose some particular doctrines of Christianity. I shall take some notice of what he offers with regard to each of these. And shall begin with considering his insinuations against the character of our blessed Saviour himself, notwithstanding he frequently affects to speak of him with great seeming veneration.

He commends him, p. 168, among other things for this, that he did not like other lawgivers in 'any instance give up the cause of virtue and the common good of mankind, to comply with the prevailing prejudices of the people.' And yet he would have us believe, that in compliance with the prejudices of the people,* he 'justified the gospel scheme on the foot of Moses and the prophets;' that he not only asserted the authority of those writings, though they only falsely pretended to divine inspiration, but imposed a sense upon them which he knew was not their sense, and put that false sense upon the Jews for the real original intention of the Holy Ghost, and particularly that he pretended to be the person that had been foretold and spoken of by the prophets, under the character of the Messiah; whereas according to this writer he himself could not but be sensible that the prophets had never spoken of him at all; but of some temporal prince that should sometime or other rise up in Judea, and deliver the Jews from their enemies.

But this is not all. He represents him as suffering himself to be 'carried about for a twelvemonth together by the Jewish mob all over the country, and to be declared their Messiah' (i. e. their temporal prince in opposition to Cæsar, which is the only sense he puts upon that expression), and that they 'had led him in triumph to Jerusalem, and proclaimed him king in this sense but three days before he was apprehended, without his opposing it. That therefore the Jewish chief priests and rulers were under a necessity of doing what they did, in order to save their country from ruin. That

* But certainly he that on all occasions declared with so noble a zeal and freedom against the traditions of the elders, for which the Jews had the highest veneration, and detected the hypocrisy of the Scribes and Pharisees, whom the people admired and revered as holy persons, would have declared with equal zeal against the law of Moses itself if he had looked upon it to be as this author represents it, 'a wretched scheme of superstition, blindness, and slavery, contrary to all reason and common sense,' imposed upon them 'under the specious pretence of a divine institution. And he would not have deserved the name of a true reformer in religion, if he had not endeavoured to undeceive the people, and to detect and expose so pernicious an imposture. And his not doing so, but all along representing that law as divine, and never once in the whole course of his ministry, dropping an insinuation to the contrary, is a manifest proof that he himself looked upon it to be divine original and authority.

‘though they could not prove that he had made any pretensions to the crown against Cæsar, yet they presumed he must have given the people some encouragement that way, or else so strong and general an expectation could never have been raised and kept up.’ And our author himself observes, that ‘had he renounced any such pretensions sooner, as he did at last, the people would all have forsook him, as they did as soon as they found he was not for their turn, and that he had as they thought, betrayed them.’ Thus it is evident, that he justifies our Lord’s murderers, and represents them as only having acted as became good patriots to prevent the ruin of their nation;* and insinuates that he brought his own death upon himself, by having encouraged the Jewish mob to take him for their Messiah or temporal king, and to proclaim him to be so but three days before: and that he never renounced these pretensions till he was before the Roman governor. And if so, I know not upon what foundation he there represents him as ‘a glorious martyr and confessor for the truth.’ Thus his determined malice against our blessed Lord plainly discovers itself from under the disguise he endeavours to throw over it. See p. 350—353.

But it may be easily proved that these insinuations are as false as they are malicious. Nothing is more evident than that on the one hand our Lord all along disclaimed all pretences to the being a temporal prince in opposition to Cæsar; though this writer insinuates, that he never renounced these pretensions till he came upon his trial before Pilate: and that on the other hand, he all along claimed to be the Messiah foretold and spoken of by the prophets, though he affirms that he renounced that character upon his trial, and ‘died upon that renunciation.’

As to the first, not only did he withdraw when the populace would have ‘taken him by force to have made him a king,’ John vi. 5. but to avoid all appearance of setting up for a temporal sovereignty, when one desired him to speak to his brother to divide the inheritance with him, he answered ‘Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?’ Luke xii. 14. There was nothing he more severely rebuked among his disciples than ambitious contentions who

* Whatever glosses the chief priests, the scribes and Pharisees, might think proper to put upon it in their council, and however they might colour over their design with a pretence of zeal for the public good, John xi. 17, 48, &c., yet it is evident from the whole evangelic history, that the real motive was their malice and envy; because with an impartial zeal he had rebuked their crimes and vices, and detected their hypocrisy, and opposed their authority and traditions. Hence we read so often of their being filled with rage against him, and taking counsel to slay him. Their malice was so apparent that Pilate himself could not but observe it. If he had believed that Jesus had set himself up for a prince of the Jews in opposition to Cæsar, it concerned him more than it did them to prevent it. But he knew that the ‘chief priests had delivered him for envy,’ Mark xv. 10, and therefore endeavoured to get him freed from punishment. And whereas this writer, to excuse the chief priests, &c., lays his death upon the multitude, who he pretends were enraged at him for at last disclaiming his being their Messiah; on the contrary, it is evident, that it was the chief priests and elders that moved and persuaded the people to do what they did, Matt. xxvii. 20; Mark xv. 11. And their honesty appears in this, that they accused him to Pilate as perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar, Luke. xxiii. 2, though they knew that accusation was false, and that when the question was proposed to him, he had required them to ‘render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar’s.’

should be greatest ; and he declared, that he himself 'came not to be ministered unto but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.' He declared both to his own disciples and to the multitude, that if any man would come after him, that is, would be his disciple, 'he must deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow him.' Instead of raising them to expectations of great worldly advantages, as he expressly foretold his own sufferings and death, so he declared that his disciples should be 'hated and persecuted of all men for his name sake,' and that 'in this world they should have tribulation.' And the rewards he promised to those that should believe and obey him, were not the riches and honours of this present world, but the spiritual and eternal rewards of a future state.

But though he so plainly disclaimed all pretensions to worldly dominion and sovereignty here on earth, yet it is certain that he claimed to be the Messiah that had been promised and foretold from the beginning. From whence it is evident, that he did not look upon the Messiah foretold by the prophets to be as our author represents him, merely a temporal prince. John the Baptist, when he was sent to, plainly and openly declared that he was not the Messiah or the Christ. But did our Lord Jesus ever during the whole course of his personal ministry, make such a declaration concerning himself? far from it. Whenever any gave him the title of the Christ, the Son of David, or any of the other peculiar characters which were made use of to signify the Messiah, he never once rejected it, or rebuked those who thus addressed him: on the contrary, when Peter in the name of the disciples made that noble confession, 'Thou art the Christ the Son of the living God'; Jesus answered him, 'Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven,' Matt. xvi. 17. So he approves Martha's illustrious confession, 'I believe that thou art the Christ the Son of God which should come into the world.' John xi. 27. And when the High-priest upon his trial before the Jewish council adjured him by the living God, to tell them, whether he was 'the Christ the Son of the Blessed?' he answered directly 'I am.' And then adds, 'and ye shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.' Where he evidently applies to himself what the prophet Daniel saith of the Messiah under the character of the 'Son of man,' and which by this writer's own acknowledgment all the Jews, and Jewish Christians understood of the Messiah. See Mark xiv. 61, 62. Dan. vii. 13, 14. And this was the pretended blasphemy for which they condemned him. And when he was before Pilate, though he told him that his 'kingdom was not of this world,' yet even then so cautious was he of saying any thing that should look like a disclaiming the character of the Messiah, that when Pilate asked him whether he was a king, he answered that he was; that is, that he was the person that had been promised and foretold by the prophets under that character. See John xviii. 37. Matt. xxvii. 11. Luke xxiii. 3. Accordingly Pilate when he brought him out to the Jews said, 'Behold your king.' And this was the crime

of which the chief-priests, and by their instigation the multitude, accused him to the governor, though our author pretends that the reason of their rage against him, was his disclaiming before Pilate that he was their king or Messiah. So far therefore is it from being true, that our Saviour renounced his being the 'Messiah in the prophetic sense, and died upon that renunciation,' as this writer with an unparalleled confidence in falsehood over and over asserts; that the very contrary is true; that he declared himself to be the Messiah upon his trial, and died upon that declaration. His asserting it was the cause of his condemnation by the Jewish council, and was the crime urged by them against him before Pilate. This was in an especial manner the glorious truth for which he died a martyr, and which he sealed with his blood. And after his resurrection he opened the understandings of his disciples that they might know the scriptures, and explained to them the passages in the prophetic writings relating to himself as the true Christ, that had been there promised and foretold. And this the apostles, and the apostle Paul as much as any of them, preached under the influence of his divine Spirit. Now what idea does this writer give us of all this? That this pretended Messiahship of Jesus was all a fiction. The prophets had never spoken of him at all, nor of any Messiah, but a temporal prince and national deliverer of the Jews, and of them only. And what is this but to declare, that our Lord Jesus Christ was a deceiver, and that the whole Gospel is one grand imposture, and the article so much insisted upon there, and which our author makes to be the only proper article or doctrine of religion peculiar to the Gospel dispensation, see p. 349, is an absolute falsehood, and gross imposition.

I shall not enter upon a distinct consideration of the prophecies relating to the Messiah, in order to show how amply they are fulfilled in our Lord Jesus Christ; this would carry me too far, and is a subject which hath often been largely and justly handled. I shall only briefly observe, that whereas there are two things which this writer represents as necessarily entering into the character of the Messiah, as foretold by the prophets: the one is, that he was to be no more than a temporal prince, and his kingdom and dominion was to be of a worldly nature: the other is, that he was only to be a king of the Jews, and to be a national deliverer or saviour of them only, and not of the Gentiles: the contrary to both these may be manifestly proved from the prophecies themselves that relate to this matter. It will be easily granted that the kingdom of the Messiah, and the advantages and blessings of it are sometimes represented by figures and emblems drawn from the glory and magnificence of earthly kingdoms. Nor is this to be wondered at by any one that considers the nature of the prophetic style, which delighted in bold and pompous figures and allusions, and often represented things of a spiritual nature under images drawn from the things of this world; but at the same time there are many things said by them which plainly show that the kingdom ascribed to him, is not like the kingdoms of this world in its nature and design, but erected

for far nobler purposes. That the great and principal design of it was to establish truth and righteousness, and spread the knowledge of God and religion, and mutual benevolence and charity amongst mankind. This is the manifest import of those remarkable prophecies concerning the Messiah and his kingdom which we have, Isa. xi. 1—10 and Isa. xlii. 1—7. That this is the name whereby he should be called 'the Lord our righteousness,' Jer. xxiii. 5, 6. And in the ninth chapter of Daniel, where Messiah the prince is so expressly promised, the end of his coming is signified to be to 'finish the transgressions, to make an end of sin, to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness,' Dan. ix. 24, 25, &c. The same person that is sometimes represented as a glorious king, is also represented as 'a priest for ever,' not after the order of Aaron, as it must have been if the law of Moses had continued in force under his reign, but 'after the order of Melchisedec,' Ps. cx. 4. He is also described as a great prophet, to whom the people were commanded to hearken, Deut. xviii. 15—18. And this character of the Messiah was so well known, that even the Samaritan woman could say, 'I know that Messiah cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come he will tell us all things,' John iv. 25. In that remarkable prophecy relating to the Messiah, and which was understood of him by the ancient Jews, from Isa. lii. 13, to the end of the fifty-third chapter, as it is foretold concerning him, that he should be 'exalted and be very high,' so his deep humiliation and most grievous sufferings are strongly described in a variety of emphatical expressions, and the reasons and ends of those sufferings are plainly signified; that it was 'for our transgressions' that he was to suffer; that he was to 'make his soul an offering for sin,' and to 'bear the sins of many;' that by his 'stripes we might be healed;' and that by 'his knowledge he should justify many,' and should 'make intercession for the transgressors.' In the illustrious prophecy concerning the Messiah, Mal. iii. 1, he is described under the character of the 'messenger of the covenant,' and what kind of covenant that was, we are informed, Jer. xxxi. 31—35, from which it appears that it was to be a new covenant, distinct from that made with the Israelites when they were brought out of Egypt, and that the promised blessings of it were to be of a spiritual nature; such as that God would write his law in their heart, and teach them to know him, and forgive their iniquity.

And as these things plainly show that the kingdom of the Messiah spoken of by the prophets was not merely of a secular nature, like the kingdoms of this world, and that the principal benefits of it, and in which the glory of it is described as principally consisting, are spiritual and divine; so it is also evident, that these benefits and this salvation are represented there as not confined to the Jews only, but extending to all mankind. Thus in the promise made to Abraham, and which is so often referred to in the New Testament, it is said, that 'in his seed should all the families of the earth be blessed.' When Jacob prophesies of the Messiah under the name of Shiloh, it is declared that unto him should 'the gathering of the people be,' Gen. xlix. 10. It is

foretold that in the time of that 'Branch that should grow out of the root of Jesse, the earth should be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea; and that to him should the Gentiles seek,' or as the Seventy render it, 'in him shall the Gentiles trust,' Isa. xi. 1, 9, 10. That God would 'put his Spirit upon him, and he should bring forth judgment unto the Gentiles, and the Isles should wait for his law;' and that God would 'give him for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles,' Isa. xlii. 1, 4, 6. And again, that God 'would give him for a light to the Gentiles, that he might be the salvation of God unto the ends of the earth,' Isa. xlix. 6. He is described under the character of the 'desire of all nations,' Hag. ii. 6—9, to show that he was promised and designed to be a blessing to all nations. The general conversion of the Gentiles to the knowledge of God and true religion is frequently signified by the prophets in strong and noble, though figurative expressions, see Mal. i. 11. Isa. ii. 2, 3. Some of those expressions do indeed carry a manifest allusion to the manner of worship that was in use under the legal dispensation, see Isa. lxvi. 23. Zech. xiv. 16, 17, 18; but the general design of those expressions is no more than to signify that the Gentiles should be brought into the true church of God, and should become his people, and worship him in a pure and acceptable manner, according to his appointment; but not that the Mosaic law and the rites there prescribed should be observed by the Gentiles: the contrary to which plainly appears from some of those passages. Thus Mal. i. 11, the conversion of the Gentiles is represented by their 'offering incense unto the Lord, and a pure offering in every place:' but that this cannot be understood literally of their offering incense and oblations according to the law is evident, because that law did not allow incense to be offered in any place but at the temple or tabernacle. So it is foretold, Isa. xix. 9—21, that the 'Egyptians should know the Lord;' and that they should offer 'sacrifice and oblation;' and that an 'altar should be erected unto the Lord, in the midst of the land of Egypt, and a pillar at the border thereof unto the Lord.' Where it is manifest these expressions are not to be taken literally as signifying the manner in which they should worship God; for both these, the erecting pillars to God any where at all, and the erecting altars in any place but in the land of Canaan, at the place which the Lord should choose there, are forbidden in that law. In that prophecy it is also farther declared, that Egypt and Assyria, by which are signified the chief of the heathen nations, should as well as Israel be God's people and inheritance. Whereby it is plainly signified that the distinction of nations should then be taken away; there should be no difference between Jews and Gentiles; and the peculiar rites of the Mosaic constitution should be abolished, see Isa. xix. 24, 25. With a view to this state of things, all nations are often called upon to praise the Lord for his mercy and truth, and to serve him with gladness; it is signified that there was a time coming when his way 'should be known upon earth, and his saving health unto all nations; when all the earth should worship

him, and should sing unto his name,' and a glorious reign of God is spoken of that should be the just cause of universal joy and rejoicing to all people. ' *

In a word, nothing can be more evident than it is from the prophecies that the kingdom of the Messiah is represented as an universal benefit, the happy effects of which were not to be confined to the Jews, but were to extend unto all nations. And though many of the Jews through their selfishness and narrow prejudices would fain have appropriated the benefits of the Messiah to their own nation; yet there were some among them that still preserved juster notions of things in conformity to the plain declarations of the ancient prophecies concerning him. Thus aged Simeon, who was one of those that 'expected the consolation of Israel,' that is, waited for the coming of the Messiah, when he took Jesus into his arms, and blessed God for having caused him to live and see the promised Messiah, calls him 'the salvation of God which he had prepared before the face of all people; a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of his people Israel,' Luke ii. 30, 31, 32. And even the Samaritans, who had the same hopes and expectations of the Messiah with the Jews, looked for him under the notion of the Saviour of the world: 'We know' say they, 'that this is indeed the Christ the Saviour of the world.' John iv. 42.

From the several passages that have been referred to, and others that might be mentioned, it appears that the kingdom of the Messiah, and that glorious state of things so much spoken of in the prophets, is not to be understood merely of a worldly dominion or empire, under the government of a mere temporal prince, that was to be a proper king of the Jews, and of them only, but of a kingdom of righteousness and peace, of truth and holiness; the proper design of which was to spread the knowledge and practice of true religion among men: that this Messiah to whom this kingdom belonged was to be the great prophet and teacher of his church, the great high priest but not after the order of Aaron, the messenger of a new and most gracious covenant, different from that which God made with the Israelites when he brought them out of Egypt: that he was to appear in a mean and humble form, and to endure the greatest sufferings, and by those sufferings to make reconciliation for iniquity: that he was to be cut off out of the land of the living, and in consequence of this was to be highly exalted; that his dominion was to be extensive over all nations, and to continue to the end of the world: that the blessings of his reign were not to be confined to the Jews only, but were to extend unto all nations; he was to be a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the salvation of God unto the ends of the earth; so that the whole world should have reason to rejoice in his coming, and in the dispensation he introduced, as an universal blessing.

When therefore the King or Messiah, of whom such glorious things are spoken, is represented as 'sitting on the throne of David

* See Psal. lxi. 1—4. lxvii. 1—4. xcvii. xcviii. c. cxvii.

his father ;' it is evident this cannot be understood in the sense this author puts upon that phrase, as if he were to be only a temporal prince, and a national Deliverer and Saviour of the Jews only ; which by no means answers the idea the prophets gave us of the Messiah. All that is intended in these expressions is, that as he was to proceed out of the family and race of David, so he was to be king as David was, but in a far more sublime and glorious sense. David's being chosen and set apart by God's own special designation and appointment to be king over Israel, who were then God's peculiar people and inheritance, whom he 'fed according to the integrity of his heart, and guided by the skilfulness of his hands,' Ps. lxxviii. 70, 71, 72, was a type of that more glorious kingdom and sovereignty, which the Messiah was to exercise over the universal church. In that remarkable prophecy relating to the Messiah, Isa. ix. 6, 7, after it is said, 'Unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given : and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father,' or as the Seventy render it, the 'Father of the world to come,' or the 'future age,' 'The Prince of Peace :' it is added, 'of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end ; upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice, from henceforth even for ever : the zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.' From which passage it is evident, that as the person there spoken of, is represented by characters that show him to be vastly superior to David, so the kingdom ascribed to him, though figuratively signified by the expressions of his sitting upon David's throne, and upon his kingdom, must needs be understood to be of a far higher and nobler nature ; even that kingdom so often represented by the prophets as a kingdom of righteousness and truth, charity and benevolence. That kingdom of the Son of Man spoken of by Daniel, which is represented as of a different kind from all former dominions and empires ; which are described under the emblem of furious wild beasts, destructive powers ; whereas this is represented as an universal blessing to mankind.

If it be said, that granting all this to be true, yet still these prophecies cannot be applied to our Lord Jesus Christ, since the event hath not answered these glorious predictions of universal peace, righteousness, &c., that are represented as attending the Messiah's kingdom ; I answer, that if it be considered that our Lord Jesus Christ hath brought in a new and most perfect dispensation, the manifest tendency of which is to establish righteousness, truth, peace, and universal charity and good-will amongst mankind, without distinction between Jews and Gentiles : that in consequence of his grievous sufferings, which were expressly foretold God hath 'highly exalted him,' and he was declared to be the 'Son of God with power :' that notwithstanding all the opposition it met with, the gospel of his kingdom attended with the Holy Ghost, sent down from heaven, and with the most glorious manifestations of a divine power, made a surprising progress, and in a few years was pub-

lished throughout the vast Roman empire ; the kingdom of Satan and pagan idolatry fell down before it ; and vast numbers were every where turned from darkness to light, from worshipping idols to serve the living and true God, and from vice and wickedness, and the most immoral conduct, to a life of holiness, purity and virtue. Any one that considers this, and at the same time considers the pompous figures of the prophetic style, will not be surprised that such a glorious person, and such a dispensation and state of things should be foretold and set forth by lofty figures, and in the most strong and elevated expressions. And if Christians afterwards fell off from the purity and glory of the gospel into a great and general apostacy ; though still in times of the greatest degeneracy there were many thousands among them that faithfully adhered to the true worship, love, and obedience of the only true God through Jesus Christ, and to the practice of real piety and righteousness ; and if there has risen up an exorbitant anti-christian power and spiritual tyranny, which hath been of long continuance ; this also hath been plainly foretold, and that a very glorious state of things shall follow, and shall continue for a long time. And under that glorious state of the church, the prophetic predictions relating to the Messiah's kingdom, its universal extent, peace, purity, happiness, shall receive their fullest accomplishment. And the remarkable completion of the other parts of the prophecies leave us no reasonable room to doubt that whatever remains to be fulfilled, shall in the due season be accomplished also.

And whereas the Messiah's kingdom seems sometimes to be described with a particular regard to the Jews : and it is foretold that he should reign over them as their Prince and Shepherd, and that in his days 'Israel and Judah should dwell safely,' and in a happy state : there are two things that will entirely take off the advantage our author pretends to take from these expressions. The one is, that the terms Israel and Judah and the 'house of Jacob,' are not always to be understood in the prophets precisely of the seed of Jacob, literally so called, or of the Jewish people and nation ; but are sometimes designed to signify the church in general, as it should be vastly enlarged under the gospel dispensation, when Jew and Gentile should be all one in Christ Jesus. It might be easily shown that there is nothing in this but what is perfectly agreeable to the prophetic style and manner of expression. And in conformity to this way of speaking, the church under the New Testament is described under the character of the 'Jerusalem which is above,' Gal. iv. 26. Heb. xii. 23. True Christians are called Jews, Rev. iii. 9. 'the Israel of God,' Gal. vi. 6. The 'true circumcision,' Phil. iii. 3. And all sincere believers are called 'Abraham's seed,' and 'the children of Abraham.' The other thing to be observed is, that if some of those prophecies that speak of the advantages Israel and Judah were to enjoy under the Messiah, be understood literally of the people of the Jews, they relate to a future restoration of the Jews that is yet to be accomplished. As the present wonderful dispersion of the Jews, their being scattered through all nations of the

earth, and their finding no rest among them, but being every where hated and despised, scorned and reproached; and their still continuing in this their unexampled dispersion to be a distinct people, is foretold and described by many remarkable characters, and which could never be applied to any other nation,* so their recovery and return is also foretold. And this their deliverance is sometimes expressly applied to the latter days, and is connected with the times of the Messiah. Not as if it were to happen immediately upon the Messiah's coming: on the contrary it is plainly signified, that the Jews would despise and reject him when he came, Isa. liii. 1, 2, 3. that he would be a 'stone of stumbling and a rock of offence' to them, at which many 'should fall and be broken,' Isa. viii. 14, 15. It is intimated that Israel should not be gathered at his coming, and yet he should be glorified, Isa. xlix. 5. that the day of his coming would be great and terrible to many among them, Mal. iii. 1, 2. iv. 1. 5. And most plainly and expressly it is foretold by Daniel, that the coming of the Messiah would be attended with the destruction of their city and sanctuary, and the subversion of their whole constitution, Dan. ix. 26, 27. And finally, that after they had continued many days, or for a long time, 'without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without Teraphim:' a most exact description of their present state, when they are without any form of government, without the exercise of the legal priesthood or oblations, and at the same time free from that idolatry to which they were anciently so prone; they should 'afterward return and seek the Lord their God, and David their king,' that is, the true Messiah, who is sometimes represented under that character, and should 'fear the Lord and his goodness in the latter days,' Hos. iii. 4, 5. And that God would 'pour forth upon them a spirit of grace and supplication,' and that they should 'look upon him whom they had pierced and mourn,' Zech. xii. 10—14. xiii. 1. And their state under the Messiah is described in figurative expressions, as a state of peace and holiness, Ezek. xxxiv. 23—31, xxxvi. 21—28. This return and conversion of the Jews, and the happy effects of it, St. Paul clearly speaks of in the eleventh chapter of the epistle to the Romans. And since the former part of the prophecies relating to the Jews is so remarkably accomplished, we may regard it as a pledge and assurance, that the other part of the prophecies, relating to their future conversion and return, shall also receive its proper completion. And indeed their being still preserved a distinct people, in such remarkable circumstances, seems to show that they are reserved for some signal purposes of divine providence.

And now, upon this brief view of the prophecies relating to the Messiah, which were delivered not all at once, but by different persons, and in diverse manners, at a vast distance of time from one another, and which are remarkably accomplished in our Lord Jesus

* See Deut. xxviii. 63, 64. Amos ix. 8, 9, 11. Deut. xxx. 1—4. Jer. xxx. 11. xliii. 3. Isa. xi. 11—16.

Christ, in whom the several characters given of the Messiah, though some of them at first view seemed not very consistent with others, do wonderfully concur ; I think it must be acknowledged that such a series of prophecy carried on for a long succession of ages, yet all conspiring with an admirable harmony, the like of which cannot be produced in any other case, yields a glorious and peculiar kind of attestation to our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the dispensation he hath introduced. And when joined with his wonderful miracles, and the extraordinary effusion of the Holy Ghost, and the excellent tendency of that doctrine and religion which he taught and published to the world, lays a solid foundation for our faith in him, and obedience to the doctrines and laws which he hath given us. Our author indeed will not allow that the prophecies furnish any proof at all. He argues, that if the 'life or religion of the pope or Mahomet had been prophesied of and foretold, as some think they were,' this would have 'been no proof of the truth of doctrines, or righteousness of persons, and therefore could have been no rational foundation for true religion.' p. 332, 333. And it will be easily owned, that if our Lord Jesus Christ had been prophesied of no otherwise than as a tyrannous, wicked power, no man in his senses would have produced this as a proof that his mission was divine ; when it would rather have proved, that this was that very wicked, oppressive power that had been foretold and described, in order to warn people against it, and to keep them from being too much discouraged on the account of it, as well as to strengthen their hope that it should be at length destroyed. But when there had been a person foretold from the beginning of the world as a blessing to mankind, and the sending of whom is represented as the most extraordinary effect of divine love ; when he had been described by the most glorious divine characters, and many particular circumstances relating to his person, actions, offices, and the precise time of his coming plainly pointed out ; this being the case, when he actually came in whom all these characters met, and to whom all these predictions pointed, and in whom alone they received their accomplishment, this certainly tended highly to recommend him to the esteem of mankind, and to prepare and engage them to receive that dispensation of righteousness, truth, and charity, which he came to introduce and establish. It tended to remove the prejudices arising from the meanness of his outward appearance, from his sufferings, &c., since it was manifest from the prophecies, that even these things were expressly foretold concerning him, and made a part of the divine scheme. And it showed the great guilt of rejecting him, and thereby counteracting the great and noble design and scheme of divine providence, which had been carried on from the beginning.

I add that these prophecies, and their accomplishments, besides that they exhibit an illustrious proof of a most wise presiding providence that governs the whole series of events, and show the extent of the divine knowledge, and thus are very serviceable even to natural religion, do also show the wonderful harmony between the Old Testament and the New ; that there is one and the same

spirit in both; the same uniform design and scheme still carrying on; and that 'prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.' 2 Pet. i. 21. Our author indeed makes little of all this. If the reader will take his word for it, these things are 'minute-nesses, and even minutiae minutiarum,' as he expresses it. He puts the case that the prophets 'had foretold the birth, life, miracles, crucifixion, and resurrection of Christ, particularly and minutely, in all the circumstances of time, place, persons, &c., and then he asks, 'what could this have proved, but only that these men had the certain knowledge of futurity in those matters? And consequently, that these events were necessary, as depending upon necessary causes, which might be certainly foreknown and predicted?' p. 332. I shall not stay to expose the absurdity of this passage, which plainly implies a denial of God's prescience of future contingencies, and seems to suppose a fatal necessity in human actions and events. For if the actions here referred to, and all the several events foretold by the prophets, 'were necessary, and depending on necessary causes,' we may equally suppose that all other events, and the actions of all men, at all times, are necessary, and owing to necessary causes, since they have not greater marks of freedom than these had; which would be an odd supposition in one that on all occasions discovers such a mighty zeal against fatalism, and sets up as a warm advocate for man's free-agency. But not to insist upon this, I shall only observe that if the prophets' foretelling these things doth prove, as the author owns, that they 'had the certain knowledge of futurity in these matters,' it proves they foresaw things which it was impossible for any human sagacity to foresee, and which could only be known to him whose providence presides over all events, and whose views extend throughout all ages. And consequently, it proves, that those prophets were extraordinarily inspired with the knowledge of those things by God himself; and we may be sure, that he would not have thus inspired them but for some valuable end. And in the present case, their being inspired to foretel the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, was with a view to keep up the expectation of this glorious Redeemer that was to come, and the better to prepare the world for receiving him when he actually came; and that by considering the predictions that went before, concerning him, it might appear that he was the extraordinary person, the sending of whom was the thing which the divine providence had all along in view. This gives a great solemnity to his divine mission, and is of signal use, in conjunction with the other illustrious attestations given from heaven. And there having been such a succession of prophets raised up among the Jews, who showed by their wonderful prediction, that they had extraordinary communications from God, and who all harmoniously concurred, both in confirming the Law of Moses that had been already given, and carrying the views of the people to another and more glorious dispensation that was to succeed it, connected the Old Testament and the New, and confirmed the divine original of both.

CHAPTER XIII.

The author's charge against the apostles, examined. His pretence that they themselves were far from claiming infallibility, considered. It is shown that they did profess to be under the unerring guidance and inspiration of the Holy Ghost, in publishing the gospel of Jesus ; and that they gave sufficient proofs to convince the world of their divine mission. The attestations given to Christianity, and to the doctrines taught by the apostles, by the extraordinary gifts and powers of the Holy Ghost, considered and vindicated, against our author's exceptions. His pretence that those gifts of the Holy Ghost might be used like natural faculties and talents, according to the pleasure of the persons who were endowed with them, either for the promoting truth or error ; and that the false teachers, as well as the true, had these extraordinary gifts and powers, and made use of them in confirmation of their false doctrines, examined at large.

HAVING examined our author's insinuations against the Lord Jesus Christ, let us now proceed to consider what he offers with a view to subvert the authority of the apostles, and to show that they are not at all to be depended on, in the account they give of the religion of Jesus, of which they were the first authorised teachers and publishers to the world. He affirms that they themselves never so much as pretended to the infallible guidance of the Holy Spirit ; or if they had pretended to it, their great differences among themselves about the most concerning points of revelation would have been an evident demonstration to the contrary : that they preached quite different and even contrary gospels : they reported the doctrine of Christ according to their own Jewish prejudices, and made a wrong representation of several facts, ascribing to him things which he never did, and prophecies which he never uttered, and doctrines which he never taught ; that besides this, the New Testament was farther corrupted and interpolated afterwards by the Christian Jews, so that, as it now stands, it is a strange mixture of religions, of Christianity and Judaism, though they are the most opposite things in the world.

I shall first begin with the attempt he makes against the infallibility and divine inspiration of the apostles. He alleges that ' There was no pretence in those apostolical times to any Spirit or Holy Ghost, that made men either infallible or impeccable ; that set men above the possibility of erring or being deceived themselves as to the inward judgment, or of deceiving others in the outward sentence and declaration of that judgment. This was the wild and impudent claim of the church of Rome in after ages, which the apostles themselves, who really had the Holy Ghost, and the power of working miracles, never pretended to. And though this has been liberally granted them, and supposed of them

by our Christian zealots and system-mongers, yet it is what they never claimed,' pp. 80, 81.

As to what he calls their being impeccable; an absolute impossibility of ever sinning at all, or doing a wrong thing in a single instance, in the whole course of their lives, neither the apostles themselves, nor any for them, ever did pretend to this. Nor is it at all necessary to suppose such an impeccability as this in order to their being depended upon. It is sufficient if they were persons of such honesty and integrity as to be incapable of contriving and carrying on a deliberate solemn imposture in the name of God, and of putting known falsehoods upon the world under the pretence of a divine revelation. This is all the impeccability, if the author is resolved to use this word, that we are concerned to stand up for with regard to the apostles, and surely this is no more than may well be supposed concerning many persons that are not absolutely raised above all the passions and frailties of human nature, in its present imperfect state. And this the apostles certainly claimed. They affirmed that they did 'not follow cunningly devised fables; that what they heard and saw, and what their hands had handled of the word of life, that they declared.' That they knew that their record was true, and called God to witness to it. They declared with a noble confidence, arising from an inward consciousness of their own integrity, that their 'rejoicing was this, the testimony of their conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not in fleshly wisdom but by the grace of God, they had their conversation in the world.' That they 'did not corrupt the word of God, nor handle it deceitfully, or walk in craftiness, but had renounced the hidden things of dishonesty; and as of sincerity, as of God, and in the sight of God spoke they in Christ.' And could appeal to those that beheld their conversation, and 'to God also, how holily and unblameably they behaved themselves.' And this author himself seems to grant, that it is 'probable that men so qualified and acting, as the apostles are supposed to have done, could have no design to deceive us.' p. 93.

As to infallibility, it is true that in the sense in which this author seems to understand it, as signifying that absolute infallibility which he tells us is the sole prerogative of God himself, or of an omniscient being, see p. 9, and p. 83, viz. an utter impossibility of ever erring, or being mistaken at any time, or in any thing whatsoever, it is certain the apostles never pretended to it: for they never pretended to be gods, or to be omniscient. Nor have any of those whom this writer contemptuously calls system-mongers ever ascribed it to them. But if by infallibility is meant no more than their being under an unerring guidance of the Holy Spirit, so as to be kept from error or mistake in teaching and delivering the doctrines and laws of Christ, it is certain they did pretend to this. They declared that Christ had expressly promised his Spirit to 'teach them all things concerning him, and to bring all things to their remembrance whatsoever he had said unto them.' John xiv. 26. And had assured them that when 'the Spirit of truth came, whom he would

send unto them from the Father, he would guide them into all truth. For he should receive of his, and show it unto them,' John xvi. 12, 13, 14. It is evident therefore that if this promise of our Saviour was accomplished, and it is certain that they themselves believed and professed that this promise was fulfilled to them, they were guided by the Spirit of truth in the whole of the gospel doctrine; and accordingly they claimed a regard to the word they preached, 'as the word of God and not of men,' and urged the disciples to 'be mindful of the commandments of them the apostles of our Lord and Saviour,' 2 Pet. iii. 2; 1 Thess. ii. 13. The apostle Paul, who was not one of those that attended Christ during the course of his personal ministry, but was afterwards taken into the number of the apostles, by the immediate call of Christ himself, doth also in the strongest manner lay claim to this divine guidance and inspiration. He usually begins his epistles with declaring that he was an apostle of Jesus Christ, in order to challenge a regard to the instructions he gave and the doctrines he taught. He affirms, that the things which he preached unto others 'God had revealed unto him by his Spirit, that Spirit which searcheth all things, yea the deep things of God,' 1 Cor. ii. 4, 6, 10, 12, that he had or knew the mind of Christ, ver. 16, that the things which he writ 'were the commandments of the Lord,' 1 Cor. xiv. 37. He talks of 'Christ's speaking in him,' 2 Cor. xiii. 3. He could not more strongly assert his own divine inspiration, and the certainty and divine authority of the doctrines he had preached, than by declaring, 'though an angel from heaven should preach any other gospel than that which he had preached, let him be accursed,' Gal. i. 8, 9. And again, ver. 11, 12, 'I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.' And he plainly supposes and asserts the divine inspiration of the other apostles too, and their entire harmony in the doctrines they preached in the name of Christ, when he represents Christians as 'built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone,' Eph. ii. 20. And declares that the mystery of God was 'revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit,' Eph. iii. 5.

It is plain then that the apostles did profess to be infallibly guided by the Holy Spirit in the doctrines they taught, and the laws they delivered in the name of Christ. If it be asked, which this writer seems to say is the proper question in this case, whether they were not mistaken themselves, or what proof they gave to the contrary? see pp. 93, 94; I answer: that they were not mistaken in imagining themselves inspired by the Holy Ghost is manifest from the extraordinary gifts and powers of the Holy Ghost conferred upon them, and discovering themselves by the most wonderful effects; whereby it plainly appeared, that the promise Christ had made to them of sending his Spirit to guide them into all truth, and to 'endue them with power from on high,' that they might be his witnesses 'unto the uttermost part of the earth,'

Acts i. 8, was fully accomplished. The evident design of all these wonderful gifts and powers, which showed they were under an extraordinary influence, and had an extraordinary assistance, and of all the miracles they wrought, was to confirm the word they preached, and to engage mankind to receive what they taught as the authorized ministers and witnesses of Jesus Christ, commissioned and sent by him to teach all nations in his name, and for that purpose furnished with those extraordinary gifts and powers, both to enable and qualify them for the right discharge of their work, and to be the proofs and credentials of their mission. Accordingly the apostles all along appealed to these extraordinary gifts and miraculous powers, as the great confirming evidence of the divine authority of the doctrines they taught, and the laws they delivered in the name of Christ. This is what the apostle Peter insisted upon in his first discourse to the Jews on the day of Pentecost, Acts ii. 32, 33, 36. And what he and the other apostles appealed to before the Jewish council, Acts v. 32. The apostle Paul often refers to those extraordinary gifts and miraculous powers of the Holy Ghost, as a glorious confirmation of the gospel which he preached.* His preaching and that of the other apostles was not 'with enticing words of man's wisdom:' the demonstration they gave of what they delivered was the 'demonstration of the Spirit and of power:' a demonstration of a peculiar kind, but strong and powerful and convincing, 1 Cor. ii. 4, 5. They 'preached the gospel with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven,' 1 Pet. i. 12. 'God bearing them witness with signs and wonders, and divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost according to his will,' Heb. ii. 2, 3, 4.

But though such a mighty stress is laid upon this in the New Testament, as the great confirming evidence of the Christian religion, this writer would have it all pass for nothing. It yields no more evidence to it, than if there had been no such extraordinary powers given at all. This is very strange. Let us consider the reasons he gives for it. It is because 'the extraordinary powers and gifts in the apostolic age were never confined or annexed to any moral character, but the false prophets and teachers had them as well as the true; and because those extraordinary gifts and powers did not make men either infallible or impeccable, as they did not destroy natural liberty or free agency, but they who were endued with them might make either a good or bad use of them, as much as of any natural faculties or talents.' See Pref. p. 9. And again he observes, that they who in apostolical times had those extraordinary gifts and powers, were left at liberty to exercise them upon the common principles of reason and human prudence. And from hence we find that some made a right use of them for edification; and others employed them only to serve the purposes of emulation and strife, which introduced great confusions and disorders among them. And this is an evident proof

* Rom. i. 11; xv. 18, 19; 1 Cor. i. 6, 7; 1 Thess. i. 5; Gal. iii. 2, 5.

that the persons vested with such extraordinary gifts and powers were neither infallible nor impeccable, that is, they were not hereby made incapable either of deceiving others, or of being deceived themselves. And then he repeats what he had observed before, that false prophets, and the most wicked seducers might and did work miracles, which they could not have done, had miracles been any evidence or proof of truth and sound doctrine,' pp. 80, 81.

As the main foundation of all he here offers lies in supposing it as a thing not to be contested, that all those extraordinary gifts or powers, when once given, were as much in men's own power as any of their natural faculties or talents, and might be equally made use of to promote and propagate truth and falsehood, I shall distinctly examine this supposition with regard to the principal of those extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost, that were poured forth in the apostolical age.

The only extraordinary gift concerning which there is any just pretence of making that supposition is that of tongues. Those that had this gift probably had as much command of that language or languages which they had once communicated to them by the immediate operation of the Holy Ghost, as any man hath of any language that he hath learned or acquired in the common way. It seems to have been in the nature of a permanent habit to be used according to their discretion, and accordingly some in the church of Corinth used it unseasonably, and are reprov'd for it by the apostle Paul, who gives directions for a proper and seasonable use of it to edification. But then it must be considered that it was only the first conferring of the gift of tongues on any person or persons that was properly miraculous; the consequent use of it was not so, and was not immediately and properly designed so much to confirm the truth of the doctrine they delivered, as to enable them to communicate that doctrine to others, which was confirmed by other miracles. The gift of tongues conferred upon the apostles on the day of Pentecost was signally miraculous. That plain, simple, and unlearned persons should be enabled at once without any previous instruction to speak with divers kinds of tongues which they had never known before, and which tongues they continued to use always afterwards: this was evidently supernatural. No force or power of a man's own enthusiastic imagination could ever produce such an effect. For who will pretend to say, that a man can speak any language that he pleases by only strongly imagining that he can speak it, though he never heard it before? And as the force of a man's own imagination could never effect this, so neither could the power or skill of any other man, or of all the men upon earth, enable him in a moment, without preparation, or previous instruction to understand and speak several languages, to which he was before an entire stranger. Such an immediate and wonderful operation upon the human mind, in impressing so many thousand new ideas at once upon it, is evidently supernatural, and seems peculiar to the author of our beings, whose inspiration hath given us understanding. This therefore was a most illustrious confirming

evidence of the truth of Christ's divine mission, in whose name it was conferred; and was a proof of the accomplishment of the promise he had made to his apostles that he would send his Spirit upon them; and of the truth of the divine commission he gave them, to go teach all nations, for which work they were hereby signally qualified. But their using any of those languages afterwards in the nations to which they were sent could not be alone a proof or miracle to those nations, because they did not know but they might have learned those languages in the ordinary way. But the proper use of those languages was to enable them to preach the doctrine of Jesus to those nations to whom they were sent, and by the other miracles they wrought they 'confirmed the word with signs following.' In like manner, when any particular person or persons on their being baptized into the faith of Jesus Christ, and laying on of the apostle's hands, which was the ordinary way by which the gifts of the Holy Ghost were communicated, received the gift of tongues, it was at that time a most illustrious miracle, and both to themselves who received this gift, and to others who observed it, and knew they could not speak those languages before, it was a glorious confirmation of the doctrine of Jesus taught by the apostles, into which they were baptized. And if we should suppose a person that had thus received the gift of tongues afterwards to apostatize from the doctrine of the apostles in which he had been instructed, and to become a false teacher, his making an ill use of that gift, supposing it to continue with him,* would not render it the less certain, that in its original donation, it was a glorious attestation to the truth of Christianity, and of the apostolical doctrine in the confirmation of which it was given. And instead of being an argument in favour of such seducers as should abuse the gift contrary to the doctrine they had received, it might be improved against them, to show that the doctrine from which they had swerved was true. It might be urged against them, that they themselves had received that gift they boasted of only in the name of Jesus Christ, and upon their believing and embracing the doctrine of the apostles; and that still none could receive those gifts in any other way: and they might be challenged to communicate that gift to others by the laying on of their hands in confirmation of their new scheme of doctrine, as it had been communicated to them in confirmation of the apostolic doctrine which they had received along with that gift, and in which therefore they ought to have continued.

I have been the more particular in considering the gift of tongues, because if the supposition the author makes concerning the extraordinary gifts in the apostolic age, that men might make a good or bad use of them as much as of any of their natural faculties and talents, if this supposition holds good concerning any of those gifts,

* I am willing to make this concession, though the instances of the abuse of the gift of tongues mentioned by the apostle Paul, 1 Cor. xiv. do not at all relate to the abusing it for propagating false doctrine, but to an using it unseasonably, and with ostentation, and not in so orderly and edifying a manner as they ought to have done.

it must be the gift of tongues ; and yet even in this instance it will by no means answer the end he proposes by it, which is to show that this gift could yield no attestation at all to the truth of Christianity.

The word of wisdom, and the word of knowledge, are mentioned by the apostle Paul, among the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost, 1 Cor. xii. And as it is probable that the persons that had those gifts had their minds extraordinarily enlightened in the knowledge of spiritual and divine things, and the great important doctrines and mysteries of the gospel ; so it may well be supposed that that knowledge once communicated to the mind by the illumination of the Spirit continued there in the nature of a permanent light and habit : and those that had this knowledge might communicate it to others by speaking or writing as other knowledge is communicated. But it cannot be pretended that this gift was one of those that were capable of being abused to propagate error and falsehood. It is a contradiction to suppose that any person should by the exercise of this gift of divine wisdom and knowledge, that is, by the very actual exercise of the knowledge of truth, and by declaring and imparting to others the knowledge he himself had of the truth, promote and propagate false doctrine and error.

The same observation holds with regard to the gift of prophesying, taken in the sense in which the apostle seems to understand it, 1 Cor. xiv. for an extraordinary gift of teaching and exhorting in the public assemblies for edification and instruction in doctrine and practice. It is probable there was an abiding habit or ability this way communicated to those persons that had this gift, by virtue of which they were qualified and enabled to teach and exhort the people. Besides which, it may be concluded from the account the apostles give us, that these persons were often under an immediate afflatus of the Holy Ghost in the actual exercise of that gift in the public assemblies ; though it did not hurry them on by an irresistible impulse, but left room for a prudential management. They had it in their power to exercise it in such a way and manner as might be most for edification, and most agreeable to decency and order. But if they exercised this gift at all, if they either taught and exhorted by virtue of the habitual knowledge and wisdom, which was at first communicated to them by the Holy Ghost, and according to the ability then given them, or according to the immediate afflatus and actual inspiration communicated to them occasionally afterwards ; this gift in either case, if really used at all, was only capable of serving the cause of truth. If a man, pretending to the gift of prophesying, taught errors and false doctrines, it could not be by the real exercise of the gift of prophesying which he received from the Holy Ghost, but by falsely pretending to it when he had it not. In which case it could not be said, that it was owing to his making an ill use of the gift which he really had, as persons may make an ill use of their natural faculties and talents which they have, which is the author's suppo-

sition ; but only that he pretended to that extraordinary gift when he really had it not. And against such false pretenders also the divine wisdom and goodness had provided a remedy by another gift of an extraordinary nature, which was communicated in the first age of Christianity, viz. that of discerning of spirits, whereby persons were enabled to discern between false teachers and the true, and between falsely pretended inspirations, and true inspirations of the Holy Ghost. And any man that had this gift conferred upon him, if he really exercised it at all, must exercise it in detecting falsehood, and false teachers, because this was essentially included in the very nature of it.

Another gift or power which attended the first preachers of Christianity, and which was more peculiarly intended for a confirmation of the doctrines they delivered, was the power of working miracles ; that is, doing wonderful works far transcending all human power, of which we have several remarkable instances recorded in the Acts of the apostles. But this was not properly a permanent, constant habit to be exercised like natural faculties and talents, as this writer supposes, merely according to the pleasure or choice of the person by whom those miracles were wrought, They could only do those miracles when and upon what occasions it seemed fit to the Holy Ghost that they should do them : in which case they felt an extraordinary impulse, which is usually called the faith of miracles, which was a kind of direction to them when to work those miracles, and whereby they knew and were persuaded that God would enable them to do them. Thus e. g. it was not in the power of those that had the gift of healing, nor even of the apostles themselves, who had these gifts in a far greater measure and degree than any others, to heal the sick as often as and whensoever they pleased. For then they would scarce have suffered any of their own intimate friends to have died. But it was when God saw it fit that this gift should be exercised ; which was usually ordered then when it served best to the propagation and confirmation of the gospel. So Paul left Trophimus at Miletum sick, whom no doubt he would gladly have healed and restored at once, if it had been left merely to his own choice, to have exercised his gift of healing as he pleased. And he speaks of Epaphroditus's sickness in such a manner as shows that it did not depend upon him to recover him when he would, Phil. ii. 27. And yet we find at another time, the same apostle, when he was at Ephesus preaching the word of the Lord Jesus to those that dwelt in Asia, both Jews and Greeks, and when the Jews contradicted and opposed this doctrine, wrought the most astonishing miracles in confirmation of it. We are told, that at that time, and for such valuable ends, God ordered it so, that St. Paul fully exercised his miraculous powers. The sacred historian observes, that God ' wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul.' The manner of expression is remarkable, and shows that the miracles were God's own work, only done by St. Paul as the instrument, ' so that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the dis-

eases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them,' Acts xix. 11, 12. Sometimes the apostles raised the dead: as Peter raised Tabitha or Dorcas, and Paul raised Eutychus. But it cannot be supposed, that they could exercise that power as often as they themselves pleased, and that it depended merely on their own will and choice; but it was exercised upon extraordinary occasions, when it seemed fit to the divine wisdom that it should be so, who in that case directed them to it by a special impulse upon their minds.

Thus also with regard to the gift of prophecy, if it be taken in the strictest sense, for foretelling things to come, which was one thing promised by our Saviour to his apostles, John xvi. 13, and of which we have an instance in Agabus who is called a prophet, Acts xi. 28; xxi. 10: this was not like natural faculties, or acquired abilities to be exercised at their own pleasure. It did not depend merely upon their own will and choice, when they were to foretel things to come, or what future things they were to foretel. This depended wholly on the will of the Holy Ghost by whom they were inspired. And they could then only exercise this gift, when it seemed fit to God for wise purposes that they should exercise it. The same may be said of the extraordinary power they had in some instances of discerning the secrets of the heart, and the workings of men's spirits, and what passed inwardly in their minds, see Acts v. 3, 4; xiv. 9; 1 Cor. xiv. 25.

With regard to these and other extraordinary gifts and powers of the Holy Ghost, it is evident, that they were not, as this writer supposes, left merely to men's own direction and management, to be employed to whatever purposes they thought fit, whether good or bad, like their natural faculties and talents. But they were empowered to exercise those gifts, whenever it seemed fit to God they should exercise them for some valuable ends, for doing good, or for the confirmation of the gospel.* If therefore we should sup-

* Concerning these extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost poured forth in the first age of Christianity, I would observe, 1. That they were very various, both in their kind and degree, and were distributed, not according to the will of man, but with great variety in such proportions, and to such persons, as to the Holy Ghost seemed meet, who as the apostle tells us, 'distributed to every man severally according to his will,' 1 Cor. xii. 11. And it seems to appear from the account he gives us, that the same person was not usually partaker of several of these extraordinary gifts together, but some of these gifts were given to one, and some to another, see 1 Cor. xii. 8, 9, 10; Rom. xii. 6, 7, 8, except where persons were designed for very eminent service in the church; especially the apostles, who had all these gifts in conjunction. 2. The general design for which they were all given was not for ostentation, but for edification and use. The 'manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal,' that is, to render him useful to others, 1 Cor. xii. 7. Hence the gift of tongues was usually joined with that of prophesying, that the one might render the other more useful, Acts ii. 11; x. 46; xix. 6. 3. All these operations are ascribed to God. 'There are diversities of operations, but it is the same God that worketh all in all,' 1 Cor. xii. 6. 4. As the communicating those gifts at first, so the continuing of them to those persons that had received them, depended on the wise and good pleasure of God. So that it doth not follow that when men once had those extraordinary powers, they were always to have them, let them use them to what purposes they would. It was still in the power of him that gave them to continue or increase them, or to withdraw them from those that should endeavour to abuse them to the subversion of the gospel they were designed to promote. And seve-

pose that some who had once received some of the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost should afterwards apostatise from the true doctrine of the gospel which they had received, and should prove bad men and wicked seducers, it would not follow, that because they had those gifts once, and when they preached the truth, exercised them in confirmation of it, therefore it was in their power to exercise those gifts and miraculous powers afterwards in confirmation of error and falsehood. For since the exercise of those powers, particularly that of working miracles, depended not merely on themselves, and on their own pleasure, but on the peculiar impulse and operation of the Spirit, then on supposition that they intended to work a miracle for the confirmation of any doctrine opposite to Christianity, we may be sure that the Spirit would not give them his assistance to confirm a falsehood. Nor can this writer prove what he confidently asserts and takes for granted, that any false teachers in that age did, by virtue of any extraordinary gifts or powers of the Holy Ghost communicated to them, work miracles to confirm the false doctrines they preached. Our Saviour indeed makes a supposition, Matt. vii. 21, 22, 23, of persons 'prophesying and doing many wonderful works in his name,' who yet should be rejected by him at the last day as evil doers. But this is a very different case from that which the author puts. For our Saviour doth not there speak of false teachers working miracles in confirmation of a falsehood, but of persons that preached the true doctrine of Christ, and wrought miracles in confirmation of it, and were ready to plead this as a kind of merit, as if it was sufficient to entitle them to heaven, though they did not apply themselves to the practice of real godliness and virtue. This is the case our Saviour supposes, and it furnisheth us with this important lesson, that no external privileges or attainments, how splendid soever, and no knowledge of the doctrine of the gospel, though accompanied with the most extraordinary gifts, will recommend a man to the favour of God, or entitle him to that future blessedness, without real holiness of heart and life. And it is a supposition that may be made, that persons might have their minds extraordinarily enlightened in the knowledge of Christianity, and be inwardly convinced of the knowledge of the truth of the doctrine of Jesus, and preach that truth to others, and yet through the prevalency of some corrupt appetite, it might not have its proper sanctifying influence upon their own hearts and lives. In which case their being enabled to work miracles in confirmation of the doctrine they taught, might be a proof to others of the truth of that doctrine, though it was not a security to themselves concerning their own salvation, which depended entirely upon their own personal obedience and holiness.

ral passages of Scripture plainly intimate that the Spirit in his extraordinary gifts as well as in his more ordinary gracious operations, might be quenched and provoked to withdraw: and on the other hand, that persons by making a right use of those gifts they had, and applying to God by prayer with faith and humility, might obtain farther degrees of them, and excel in them more and more, See 1 Cor. xii. 31; xiv. 1; 1 Thess. v. 19; 1 Tim. iv. 14; 2 Tim. i. 6.

With regard to the false apostles and judaising teachers who opposed St. Paul, and taught the absolute necessity of circumcision, and the observation of the Mosaical rites in order to men's being justified and saved; it cannot be proved that any of them wrought miracles in confirmation of that doctrine. The contrary seems plain from that question the apostle proposeth to the Galatians. 'Received ye the spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? He that ministereth the spirit to you, and worketh miracles amongst you, doth he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?' Gal. iii. 2, 5. Would he have said this if miracles had been wrought, and the gifts of the Spirit communicated in confirmation of the doctrine he was opposing? He appeals to themselves as in a matter of fact that could not be contested, that miracles were only wrought, and the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit communicated in attestation of that true doctrine of the Gospel which he had preached, and not of that other Gospel, as he calleth it, which the false teachers would have imposed upon them. And accordingly in all the accounts that are given in the New Testament, and particularly in the writings of the apostle Paul, concerning the false teachers and seducers in the apostolical age, it is never so much as once intimated, that they exercised the extraordinary gifts and powers of the Holy Ghost, particularly that of working miracles in confirmation of their scheme of error and false doctrine. He represents them as persons of great cunning, 'who by good words and fair speeches deceived the hearts of the simple,' Rom. xvi. 8: as great pretenders to 'excellency of speech and wisdom' and making an ostentation of learning and philosophy, in opposition to whom he declareth concerning himself, that his 'preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the spirit and of power,' that is, it was accompanied with the power of the Holy Ghost, which theirs was not. 1 Cor. xi. 1, 4, 5; see also 1 Cor. iv. 19, 20. He represents his opposers as 'commending themselves,' but himself as one whom 'the Lord commended:' that is, by his gifts and graces vouchsafed to him, and the power attending on his ministry. They 'gloried after the flesh,' they boasted that they were Hebrews, and called themselves apostles, &c. 2 Cor. xii. 18, 22, 23. Phil iii. 4, 5, 6: but as to himself he declares, that 'truly the signs of an apostle were wrought by him in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds.' 2 Cor. xii. 12. So elsewhere he represents those false teachers as endeavouring to 'beguile men with enticing words, and to spoil them through philosophy and vain deceit, through the traditions of men; and making a show of wisdom, in will worship, and humility.' Col. ii. 4, 8, 18, 23. And in his epistles to Timothy and Titus, where he particularly describes them, they are represented as 'giving heed to Jewish fables, and given to vain babblings and oppositions of science falsely so called.' But there is not one word in all that he saith concerning them of their working miracles, or abusing the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost to confirm their false doctrines. The same observation may be made on the account the apostle Peter gives of the false

teachers mentioned in his second epistle, whom he represents as 'through covetousness with feigned words, making merchandise of men, and speaking great swelling words of vanity; and alluring men through the lusts of the flesh, and through much wantonness, and by promising them liberty.' And Jude gives pretty much the same description of them: and among other characters represents them as 'sensual, having not the Spirit,' ver. 19, i. e. they were destitute of the Spirit of God both in his graces and in his extraordinary gifts. This author therefore has no reason for asserting with so much confidence as he does, that the 'false prophets and teachers had the extraordinary gifts and powers of the Holy Ghost in the apostolic age as well as the true,' pref. p. 9. which he there lays down as a principle capable of being maintained against all opposers.

I think the observations that have been made, destroy the force of all that he advances to show that no argument can be brought to establish the truth and divine authority of the Gospel revelation from the extraordinary gifts and miraculous powers of the Holy Ghost in the apostolic age. Those gifts and powers were evidently supernatural, above all the art or power of any man, or of all the men upon earth, and showed a very extraordinary interposition. And as it was only in the name of a crucified and risen Jesus, and upon their professing their faith in him, and becoming his disciples, that any received those gifts and powers, so the imparting those gifts of the Holy Ghost as thus circumstanced, was an illustrious confirmation of the Christian faith and doctrine published to the world by the apostles of our Lord. For it must be considered that it was by the 'laying on of the hands' of the apostles, that the Holy Ghost was ordinarily communicated. See Acts viii. 14—18. xix. 6. Rom. i. 11. And where it was given immediately from heaven without the laying on of the apostles's hands, as in the case of Cornelius, and those that were with him: Acts x. 44; yet still it was in confirmation of the doctrine taught by the apostles. As they were properly speaking immediately commissioned by Christ himself to be the authorized publishers of his doctrines and laws to the world, so they were eminently distinguished above all other teachers in that age, and had an authority which no other teachers had; and that not only because they had those extraordinary gifts of the Spirit of which others also were made partakers, in a far greater abundance, and in a more excellent measure and degree. see 1 Cor. xiv. 18. 2 Cor. xii. 12. But they were invested with some extraordinary powers of a peculiar kind which no other persons had, and which were especially designed to confirm their divine mission and authority, and to engage men to pay an entire submission and regard to what they delivered in the name of Christ. Such was the power already mentioned of communicating the Holy Ghost in his extraordinary gifts by the laying on of their hands. What could have a greater tendency to convince the world that God had sent them, and that the doctrine which they published in the name of Christ was true and of divine original, than this, that

after having instructed persons in the Christian faith, they could by laying on of their hands upon them in his name, communicate some or other of those extraordinary gifts and powers in such measures and degrees as seemed fit to the Holy Ghost, who distributed them according to his will, in testimony of the truth and divinity of the doctrine they had taught them. And a most illustrious testimony it was, and which none of the false apostles or teachers of that age ever did or ever could give in confirmation of their doctrines. We may also reckon among the extraordinary powers peculiar to the apostles, and which gave them a great superiority above false teachers, the power of inflicting bodily punishments in some extraordinary cases, such was the striking Elymas the sorcerer with blindness, Acts xiii. 8—12. And some such thing is probably intended by that 'delivering unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit might be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus,' which the apostle speaks of as a power committed unto him by the Lord Jesus, 1 Cor. v. 4, 5. see also 1 Tim. i. 19, 20. which seems to relate, as the ancients explain it, to some pain, or disease, or grievous correction inflicted on the flesh or body, by the sharpness of which the guilty person might be awakened to a sense of his sin, and brought to a true repentance for it. And perhaps something of this kind is what the apostle means, when he threatens those amongst the Corinthians that had not repented of the great sins they had committed, but still persisted in them, and in an opposition to his authority, that if he came again he 'would not spare;' and speaks of his 'using sharpness according to the power which the Lord had given him for edification and not for destruction,' and of his 'having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience,' see 2 Cor. x. 6. xii. 20, 21. xiii. 2, 3, 10. Though he there intimates that he was loth to use this power without necessity, and that he 'could not do any thing,' he could not use this power he spoke of 'against the truth, but for the truth,' vers. 7, 8. This power, like that of miracles, was not to be exercised by the apostles whenever they themselves pleased, and merely to gratify their own private passions, but was exercised by the extraordinary impulse and direction of the Holy Ghost, whenever it seemed fit to God that it should be exercised to his glory, and for promoting the interests of important truth and real religion and godliness.

This also seems to have been the proper design of that remarkable judgment that was inflicted upon Ananias and Sapphira, who both fell down dead by an immediate stroke from heaven at the rebuke of the apostle Peter for 'lying to the Holy Ghost.' This was wisely ordered in the beginning of the Gospel dispensation, to procure a greater regard to the apostles who were mean in their outward appearance. Their being thus enabled to know the secrets of the heart, and the signal punishment that was inflicted on those that had formed a design to impose upon them, was a remarkable proof that they were indeed guided by 'the Spirit that searcheth all things,' and tended to give a greater weight to the testimony they gave, and the doctrine they taught in the name of Christ. Thus it

appears that as it was of great importance to establish the credit and authority of the apostles, who were the principal appointed witnesses of Christ, and the authorised publishers of his doctrine to the world, so it pleased God in his great wisdom and goodness to take care of this many ways. And to suppose that he would do all this, and interpose in so extraordinary a manner, and by such wonderful gifts and powers to confirm their authority, and to bear witness to the doctrine and religion they taught, and yet not guide and assist them in delivering that doctrine and religion, so as to preserve them from error in teaching and publishing it to the world, is absurd, and too inconsistent a conduct to be attributed to the wise and good God. Accordingly the Christians in general paid a peculiar regard both in that first age, and ever since, to the apostles of our Lord; their continuing in the Christian faith is expressed by their 'continuing in the apostles' doctrine,' Acts ii. 42: and believers are represented as 'built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets,' Eph. ii. 20. And God hath so ordered it, that the laws and doctrines they delivered and published in the name of Christ, and which were confirmed by such glorious attestations were committed by themselves to writing for the lasting use and instruction of the church in succeeding generations, under the guidance and inspiration of the same divine Spirit of truth, that assisted them in publishing the gospel, and enabled them to work such illustrious miracles in confirmation of it.

CHAPTER XIV.

The gospel taught by the apostles was the same. The author's account of the Jewish gospel, preached by them, false and groundless. The pretended difference between St. Paul and the other apostles, concerning the obligation of the Law of Moses on the Jewish converts, examined. None of the apostles urged the observation of that law, as necessary to justification and acceptance with God, under the gospel; though they all judged it lawful to observe the Mosaic rites for a season. The wisdom and consistency of this their conduct, and the entire harmony between St. Paul and the other apostles in this matter, shown. The pretended difference between them relating to the law of Proselytism to be urged on the Gentile converts. The decree of the apostolical council at Jerusalem, considered; and the reasons and grounds of that decree inquired into. No proof that the apostle Paul disapproved or counter-acted that decree. The conduct of that apostle at his trial, justified.

ANY one that impartially considers the New Testament will find one and the same uniform scheme of religion going through the whole. It appears from the writings of the apostles, and the ac-

count that is given us of their preaching, that they all published the same doctrines concerning the attributes, perfections, and providence of God, and the pure and spiritual worship that is to be rendered to him, concerning the methods of our redemption and reconciliation by Jesus Christ, concerning the design and end of his coming into the world, and of his grievous sufferings and death, which they all represent as a propitiation for our sins, concerning his resurrection from the dead, his ascension and exaltation at the right hand of God, his perpetual mediation and intercession, and his second coming to raise the dead, and to judge the world, and concerning the eternal retributions that shall then be dispensed unto all men according to their behaviour in the body. They all published the same pure and excellent laws and precepts, the same refined morals, far exceeding, by the author's own confession, what any others have advanced, and the same noble and powerful motives for engaging men to the observation of these precepts. They all taught the same gracious terms of acceptance, and made the same merciful offers in the name of God, of pardon, and grace, and eternal life upon condition of faith and repentance, and new obedience ; and denounced the same awful threatenings of eternal misery and ruin against those that should persist in obstinate impenitency and disobedience. These things they all agreed in, the apostle Peter as well as the apostle Paul ; the gospel they all preached which they professed to have 'received from the Lord Jesus,' and by the inspiration of his Spirit, and which they 'confirmed with signs following,' was entirely the same, and perfectly harmonious and consistent in all its parts. But this our moral philosopher will not allow. He endeavours to show that 'they differed among themselves about the most concerning points of revelation.' And he thinks 'this is an evident demonstration that they were not infallible, insomuch that had they pretended to any such thing, they must openly, and in the face of the whole world, have contradicted themselves in fact. pp. 80, 81. And indeed in one point there would be a very great and essential difference between them if he could prove it, viz. that whereas the apostle Paul preached Jesus Christ as the Saviour of the world, both Jews and Gentiles ; the other apostles believed in him, and preached him only as a 'temporal Messiah' and the Saviour of the Jews only.

After having observed, that the 'Jewish populace or mobility had generally a notion of Jesus Christ as their Messiah, national deliverer, or restorer of the kingdom,' he expressly asserts, 'that his own disciples had all along adhered to him upon this vain hope, and even after his resurrection, they never preached Jesus as the Messiah or Christ in any other sense,' that is, in any other sense than that of the Jewish populace, as one that was to erect a temporal kingdom, and was to be the national deliverer of the Jews. He adds, that 'no christian Jew ever believed in Jesus as the common Saviour of the world without distinction between Jew and Gentile. This is St. Paul's gospel which he had received, as he declared, by immediate revelation from Christ himself ; and had

never advised or consulted with any of the Jewish apostles about it; as well knowing that they would never come into it. see pp. 350—354. see also p. 361. And after having asserted, that the Jews who adhered to Jesus as the Messiah after his resurrection, 'all expected that he would soon come again, with a sufficient power from heaven to destroy the Roman empire, to restore the nation, and set up his kingdom at Jerusalem;' he adds, that 'this was properly the Jewish gospel which Christ's own disciples firmly adhered to and preached.' And therefore he declares, that he 'takes this to have been the plain truth of the matter, that Christianity was nothing else but a political faction among the Jews; some of them receiving Jesus as the Messiah or restorer of the kingdom, and others rejecting him under that character. See p. 328 and p. 354. And again, p. 329. he tells us, that the 'Christian Jews received nothing new on their becoming Christians, but the single article, that Jesus was the Messiah in the literal sense of the prophets, i. e. in their own national sense.' This was properly the whole of that gospel, which according to him, Christ's own disciples that had been all along with him in his personal ministry taught and published to the world.

If we were not a little used to this writer's way of saying things, we might be surprised at his asserting with so much confidence a thing which every one that can read the New Testament may easily know to be false; and it is scarce possible to suppose that he himself is so ignorant as not to be sensible that it is so. Not to enlarge upon reflections which such a conduct as this would justify, I shall produce a few out of many passages that will clearly show the falsehood of what he hath advanced. When St. Peter, whom our author represents as at the head of the Christian Jews in opposition to St. Paul, preached up Jesus as the Messiah, the Lord and Christ, immediately after our Lord's ascension; and urged the Jews to believe in him; the idea he gives of Christ as the Messiah is this, that God 'had raised up his Son Jesus to bless them in turning them away from their iniquities;' and had 'exalted him to be a prince and a Saviour,' not a temporal prince or national deliverer, but to 'give repentance unto Israel and remission of Sins.' See Acts ii. 38. iii. 19, 26. v. 31. When he was sent to preach the gospel to Cornelius, the account he gives him of what God had commanded the apostles to preach is this, 'he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he [the Lord Jesus] which was ordained of God to be the judge of quick and dead. To him give all the prophets witness that through his name, whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.' Acts x. 42, 43. Where it is evident that he represents the benefits that were to be obtained through the Messiah as of a spiritual nature; and declares, that this was the idea the prophets gave of the Messiah that was to be the author of a spiritual salvation. And in the first chapter of his first epistle he sets forth in the most noble and admirable expressions the greatness of that salvation that was to be obtained through Jesus Christ, as consisting not in a temporal national de-

liverance of the Jews of which he gives not the least hint, but in an eternal heavenly happiness, the prospects of which filled the minds of true Christians with a spiritual and divine joy under the greatest present afflictions and sufferings : and he represents this 'salvation of their souls as the end of their faith ;' and that this was the salvation of which the prophets had spoken when they 'testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glories that should follow.' See 1 Pet. i. 2. ii. 25. v. 10. The same great apostle before the whole council of the apostles and elders, and brethren at Jerusalem, declareth expressly, speaking of the Gentiles, 'God which knoweth the hearts bore them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us : and put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith.' Acts xv. 8, 9. And he adds, ver. 21. 'We believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved even as they.' No words can be more decisive to show, that Jesus Christ was regarded as the author of a spiritual salvation ; and that in this salvation all true believers were to be equal sharers without distinction between Jews and Gentiles ; which is the very gospel the apostle Paul published, and as express and full as any thing that was said by that great apostle of the Gentiles. St. James, who was another of the chief apostles of the circumcision, perfectly agrees with St. Peter in this, and shows by a passage from one of the prophets that it was foretold concerning the Messiah, that 'the Gentiles should seek after the Lord, and be called by his name.' vers. 14—17. The apostle John, whom our author represents as one of the chief teachers of what he calls the Jewish gospel, after having declared, that he 'that believeth not God hath made him a liar, because he believeth not the record that God hath given of his Son : ' proceeds to show what that record is : not that God would send him to deliver the Jews only, and restore the kingdom to them ; but he represents this as the substance of the gospel record, that 'God hath given unto us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.' 1 John v. 9, 10. In the same epistle he declares, that 'we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous : and he is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only,' that is, the sins of us believing Jews 'but for the sins of the whole world.' chap. ii. 1, 2. Can any thing possibly be more express and full to show that Christ is the Saviour of all men, Jews and Gentiles, without distinction ? The same apostle represents 'the Christ,' and the 'Saviour of the world,' as terms of the same signification, John iv. 42, and informs us, that Christ himself declared, that 'God so loved the world,' not the Jews only but the world of Jews and Gentiles, 'that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life.' Where the salvation of which Christ is the author is represented as a spiritual and eternal salvation and happiness to be conferred on all those without distinction that should sincerely believe and obey him. John iii. 16. And again, he acquaints us that Christ declared ; 'other sheep I have which are not of this fold ; them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice ; and there shall be one fold and one shepherd.' chap.

x. 16. Can any thing more clearly show that our Lord Jesus Christ would bring Jews and Gentiles into one fold, and that they should both make up one church under him as their 'common Shepherd and Saviour? And could he that represents this as our Lord's own sense, look upon him as a Saviour of the Jews only? see also chap. xi. 51, 52. which is no less express to this purpose. And chap. i. 29. St. Matthew, who was another of the Jewish apostles, represents Christ as expressly declaring that the Jews the 'children of the kingdom' should be cast out, and that 'many should come from the east, and from the west, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of God,' Matt. viii. 11, 12. And he applies to Christ the prophecies relating to the Messiah, that he should 'show judgment to the Gentiles:' and that in 'his name should the Gentiles trust.' chap. xii. 17, 18, 22. The same apostle and evangelist, instead of representing Christ as promising to come and restore the kingdom to the Jewish nation, and deliver them from their enemies, informs us, that he declared to the Jews that 'the kingdom of God should be taken from them, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof,' chap. xxi. 43. And that he foretold the utter destruction of their city and temple, and the dreadful calamities that should befall them. chaps. xxi. 41. xxii. 6, 7. and xxiv. And he represents him as commissioning his apostles to 'go teach all nations;' or as the evangelist Mark has it, to 'preach the gospel to every creature.'

It appears from this brief account, that the gospel which the apostle Paul preached concerning Christ's being the author of a spiritual, eternal salvation, and the Saviour of all men, Jews and Gentiles, that really believed and obeyed him, was taught clearly and fully by the other apostles. Nor is there any one word in any of their writings, concerning that which he pretends was the whole of the gospel they preached, that is, concerning Christ's restoring the kingdom to the Jews in their national sense. And when they write to the believing Jews, they never once comfort them with the hope of a national restoration and deliverance, which yet is the only thing he pretends they had in view. But there are many passages in their writings that point to the end of the Jewish polity as approaching: what our author pretends to offer from the book of the Revelation shall be considered afterward.

This may suffice to show the absolute falsehood of the new gospel, the author put upon the world for the gospel taught by our Saviour's own apostles, and which he calls the 'Jewish Gospel' in opposition to the gospel preached by St. Paul. A great deal of his bitter and malicious invectives in the latter part of his book is built upon this supposition: by which he undoubtedly intends to expose the New Testament writers, but really exposes himself, as a writer that has the confidence to assert any thing how false soever, which he thinks may serve the cause he has undertaken.

Let us now proceed to some other things; he offers to show the contradictions and inconsistencies between St. Paul and the other apostles. He saith, 'that the great concerning debate of that time was reduced to

these two questions: first, whether the Jewish converts were still obliged in point of religion, to obey the whole law: and secondly, whether the Gentile converts, as a matter of religion and conscience, were bound to comply with the Mosaic law of proselytism, as the necessary condition upon which the Christian Jews were to hold communion with them. In both these points, the apostles, elders, and brethren at Jerusalem in consequence of their decree stood to the affirmative, while Paul as stiffly maintained the negative against them, declaring he received this, not from man, or by any intermediate conveyance, but by immediate revelation. But the rest of the apostles, it seems, never had any such revelation, nor could Paul ever convince them. Nor could this point of difference be determined by miracles. For Peter wrought as many and great miracles as St. Paul, and perhaps St. Paul, having all the rest against him, might have been very much distanced as to any proof from miracles.' And then he pretends that the controversy rose so high at last, that it came to an absolute separation between St. Paul and the other apostles. He labours in this point in many words, and very confusedly from p. 54 to p. 81 and returns to it again, p. 361, &c.

With regard to the first point pretended to be in difference between St. Paul and the other apostles, viz. 'Whether the Jewish converts were still obliged in point of religion and conscience to obey the whole law: he represents this as the standing controversy between St. Paul and the other apostles and teachers of the circumcision, who obeyed the law as a law of righteousness, or as a necessary part of religion and means of justification with God; which Paul never would submit to, though he could comply with the law in his political capacity as the law of his country.' That 'when he preached in Asia and Greece, he ventured to advance a new doctrine of his own. Wherever he came into the Jewish synagogues, he endeavoured to convince the Jews that the ceremonial law of Moses could be no farther binding upon any such Jews as should embrace Christianity, being out of the confines of Judea; for that the ceremonial law, having been really typical and figurative of the great Christian sacrifice, was done away by the sacrifice and death of Christ the only true propitiation for sin: and consequently could be no longer obliging to the Jews any more than to the Gentiles, who were now both together to form a new spiritual society, not under the jurisdiction of Moses, but of Christ alone. That herein St. Paul had not one apostle, prophet, or teacher of that age who heartily joined with him except Timothy; and though Peter, Barnabas, &c. joined with him in preaching the gospel for a time, yet they all fell off from him afterward upon this very quarrel, because they could not agree to absolve the Jewish converts from their obedience to the law as the law of God, or as a matter of religion and conscience,' see pp. 54. 71, 72.

All this, in which the author pretends to keep close to the accounts that are given us in the Acts of the Apostles, and in St. Paul's epistles, is strangely misrepresented. He feigneth a controversy between the apostle Paul and the other apostles which never sub-

sisted at all. There was indeed a very great controversy, not between St. Paul and the other apostles (for there was an entire harmony between them in the gospel they preached) but between that great apostle and certain Jewish teachers or false apostles, who were for urging the observation of the ceremonial law upon the Gentile converts, as absolutely necessary to justification and acceptance with God. Against these St. Paul every where discovereth a great zeal. And in this he had all the other apostles of our Lord evidently on his side. When they were all met together in the Jerusalem council they passed a very severe censure upon them as troubling the churches, and subverting men's souls, Acts xv. 24, and at the same time call Paul and Barnabas their 'beloved brethren,' and give them this high encomium, that they were 'men that hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. ver. 25, 26.

The great doctrine which that apostle insisteth upon in opposition to those false teachers, viz. That we are justified freely by divine grace through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ; and that it is by faith in him that we obtain remission of sins and eternal life: this doctrine the other apostles taught as well as he, as is evident from the passages that have been above cited. Particularly the apostle Peter declareth this expressly in the council at Jerusalem in the name of them all, Acts xv. 11. And when the apostle Paul reproved Peter at Antioch, he represents the doctrine of their being justified 'not by the works of the law,' but by 'faith in Jesus Christ,' as an uncontested truth in which he and Peter and all true believers were agreed, Gal. ii. 15, 16, &c. And whereas this writer represents St. Paul as preaching in the synagogues of the Jews that Jesus Christ was the only true propitiation for sin, with a view to show that therefore the ceremonial law, having been only typical and figurative of the great Christian sacrifice, was done away by the sacrifice and death of Christ; it is certain that the other apostles preached this doctrine of Christ's being the only true propitiation for sin as fully and expressly as the apostle Paul. The passages to this purpose are well known.* Nor do they ever once direct the views of their Christian converts to the legal sacrifices as expiations for sin. And it ought to be observed that though Peter, James, and John, whom this author represents as the heads of the Christian Jews, wrote epistles to them abounding with exhortations and counsels of various kinds, in which they every where animate them to a steady adherence to the doctrines and laws of the gospel, yet they never so much as once exhort them to adhere to the observation of the law of Moses and of the rites there enjoined. Is it possible to account for this on this writer's supposition, that they looked upon the Jewish converts as obliged to obey the law of Moses, as the necessary means of justification and acceptance with God; and that they had a standing controversy on this head with the apostle Paul who taught the contrary? And if this had been the case, can it be supposed that St. Peter in his second and last epistle, written a

* See 1 Pet. i. 19, 20. ii. 21, 24. iii. 18. 1 John i. 7. ii. 2. iv. 10. John i. 29.

little before his death, would have called St. Paul his 'beloved brother,' or have recommended all his epistles to the Christian converts as written with great wisdom, and have reckoned them among the Scriptures, that is, among the writings that were divinely inspired? See 2 Peter iii. 15, 16. After the apostle Paul had, according to our author, been preaching throughout Asia and Greece, that the law of Moses was no longer obligatory on the Jews, we find him going up and 'saluting the church at Jerusalem : ' and not the least hint of any dissatisfaction, but a perfect harmony between them, Acts xviii. 21, 22. And afterwards at his last going up to Jerusalem the brethren there received him, and them that were with him, gladly. St. James and all the 'elders that were with him' treated him with great kindness, and called him 'brother.' And their advising him what course to take to remove the prejudices some of the Jewish converts had entertained against him, shows their great tenderness towards him, and how far they were from looking upon him as an enemy : and at the same time it seemeth plainly to show that what they advised him to do was not from any opinion they had of the absolute obligation of the law of Moses in point of religion and conscience, but for avoiding offence : in which their conduct was perfectly agreeable to his own, Acts xxi. 17—25. The same reflection may be made upon St. Peter's conduct at Antioch. For it appeareth from what St. Paul said to him, that before certain persons came from Jerusalem he did eat freely with the Gentiles, and being 'a Jew lived after the manner of the Gentiles, and not as do the Jews : ' though he afterwards declined this, for fear of offending some of the Jews that came from Jerusalem : which shows the principle he went upon in observing the law, as well as the apostle Paul, was the fear of giving offence, and not any opinion he had of his absolute obligation in point of conscience, Gal. ii. 12, 14. And St. Paul expressly tells us, that 'when he communicated the gospel which he preached among the Gentiles' to the apostles at Jerusalem, 'they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto him, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter ;' for that 'he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in him (Paul) towards the Gentiles.' And that accordingly, 'Peter, James, and John gave to him and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship,' that they should 'go unto the heathen,' and themselves 'unto the circumcision,' Gal. ii. 2—9. Where nothing is more plain than that the other apostles approved the doctrine which St. Paul had preached, and owned his divine mission : and that it was the same gospel that was taught by Paul and Barnabas, and by the other apostles, only called the 'gospel of the uncircumcision' as preached among the Gentiles, and the 'gospel of the circumcision,' as preached to the Jews. Taking all together it doth not appear that there was the least difference between St. Paul and the other apostles with regard to the obligation of the Mosaic law. Neither he nor they looked upon it as absolutely obligatory in point of conscience, and as necessary to our justification and accep-

tance under the gospel, though both he and they looked upon it to be still lawful to observe the Mosaic rites in compliance with weak consciences. So that there was a perfect harmony between them in doctrine and practice.

This author, in order to make it appear that there was an opposition between St. Paul and the other apostle, gives a very wrong representation of his conduct; as if 'in all the synagogues where he preached in Asia Minor and Greece, he absolved the Jewish converts from all obligations to the Mosaic Law;' and made the absolute abrogation of that law to Jews as well as Gentiles, the constant subject of his preaching. Whereas if we examine the account that is given us of St. Paul's preaching in the synagogues of Asia Minor and Greece, nothing of this appears. We read that he preached to the Jews in their synagogues that 'Jesus was the Christ the Son of God,' that he 'died for our sins according to the Scripture,' that he 'rose again from the dead,' that through faith in him remission of sins was to be obtained. He preached 'repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.*' And if the Jews to whom he preached were brought to acknowledge that Jesus was the Christ, and to look to him for salvation in a hearty compliance with the self-denying terms of the gospel covenant, it doth not appear by any one instance in the whole New Testament, that he was at all troublesome to them about the observation of the Mosaic rites; he left them still to follow their old customs, till by a farther light, and a more thorough knowledge and acquaintance with the gospel, they should see that they were free.

Here it is proper to observe that the judaizing Christians in that age who professed to believe in Christ, and yet continued to observe the law of Moses, were of two different kinds. There were some of them that looked upon that law to be of such indispensable necessity that no man could be saved but by the observation of that law, and therefore they urged it even upon the Gentile converts. They laid such a stress on circumcision, and the other ritual precepts of the law that they would not acknowledge any for their brethren, or look upon them as members of the church, except they submitted to those rights. Against these the apostle Paul all along zealously contends. And these all the other apostles opposed and condemned no less than he: and many of them afterwards openly apostatized from Christianity, as may be gathered from several passages in the New Testament. But there were other Christian Jews that were for observing the law of Moses from a conscientious scruple that it was not yet repealed, who yet were of a different character from the former. They knew God had prescribed those rites, and were not satisfied that they were as yet abrogated, and therefore, though they regarded the believing Gentiles as their brethren in Christ, and were not for imposing the observation of the law upon them; yet they thought

* See for an account of the subject of St. Paul's preaching, Acts ix. 20—23; xiii 23—45, 50; xvii. 2, 3, 5; xviii. 5, 6; xx. 21; 1 Cor. i. 23; ii. 2; xv. 3, 3, 4.

that they themselves, as Jews, were obliged by virtue of the divine precept to observe those peculiar rites that God had prescribed to their nation. But then at the same time they expected to be justified and saved only through the free grace of God offered in the Redeemer; here they laid the stress of their hopes, 'looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.' Our author seems not able or not willing to conceive this. He thinks that if they observed the Mosaic rites at all as obligatory by virtue of the Divine command, they must observe them as necessary parts of religion, and the necessary means of justification, and must expect to be accepted and justified on account of them. For where positive things are joined in the same divine law with moral, the positive are as necessary as the moral to our acceptance with God, and are put on an equal foot in point of conscience as the necessary terms of acceptance, because equally required. This is the substance of his arguing, pp. 52, 53. But it doth not follow that because positive and moral precepts are both required in the same law, therefore they are equally parts of religion, and of equal necessity in point of acceptance with God. For though every good man that looks upon any positive precept as required by God ought to obey it, whilst he thinks it required: yet he does not lay the principal stress of his hopes of the Divine favour and acceptance on such observances, but on things of a higher nature. And therefore it is very supposable that the Jewish Christians might still look upon themselves to be obliged to observe the Mosaic rites by virtue of the Divine command which they did not see to be yet repealed; and yet expect the pardon of their sins, and acceptance with God, and eternal life, only through the free grace and mercy of God in Jesus Christ as the great appointed Mediator and Saviour of mankind, who is the propitiation for the sins of the world. And these were always treated with great regard and tenderness by St. Paul and the other apostles. He speaks of the saints at Jerusalem with an affectionate tenderness, and stirs up the Gentiles to contribute liberally for their supply. He forbids the Jewish and Gentile converts to condemn or despise one another on account of their observing or not observing the legal rites and ceremonies: see Rom. xiv. and declares, that in 'Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but faith which worketh by love,' Gal. v. 6; 1 Cor. vii. 19: that the 'kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost,' Rom. xiv. 17. He was for 'receiving those that are weak in faith,' and who still thought themselves obliged to observe the legal rites: and was for having them all 'walk by the same rule' as far as they were agreed, and for their bearing with one another till God should farther enlighten them,' Phil. iii. 15, 16. And it is probable that many of these came in time to see their liberty, and that by treating them with gentleness and forbearance, they by degrees overcame their prejudices and scruples, till at length they entirely joined with the Gentile converts. Such was the wise and moderate conduct of the

apostle Paul and the other apostles in this matter. And accordingly it is evident that though this great apostle was fully satisfied and persuaded by revelation from Christ himself, that the law of Moses was no longer obligatory in point of conscience since the death of Christ, yet he looked upon those legal rites as things which he himself might still lawfully observe for a while in order to promote the main interests of Christianity. He declares concerning himself that to 'the Jews he became as a Jew that he might gain the Jews,' 1 Cor. ix. 20. And it appears how careful he was not to offend them, in that 'he circumcised Timothy because of the Jews which were in those parts, because they all knew that his father was a Greek,' Acts xvi. 3. And is it likely that he who was so cautious of offending them, should, as this author represents it, make it the constant subject of his preaching in all their synagogues, that the law of Moses was entirely abrogated, and that the Jews themselves were absolved from all obligations to observe it? We find him afterwards 'shaving his head in Cenchrea, for he had a vow,' Acts xviii. 18, and 'keeping the feast at Jerusalem,' ver. 21. It was therefore a false accusation that was brought against him, though this writer saith that it was a matter of fact that could not be denied, that 'he had taught all the Jews which were among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying, that they ought not to circumcise their children, neither to walk according to their customs,' Acts xxi. 21. They accused Paul as if he had every where taught that it was absolutely unlawful for the Jews to circumcise their children, or observe any of the legal rites. This was the charge: and this charge was not true. He had never urged it as absolutely unlawful for the Jews to observe the Mosaic law, or their ancient customs. And though he had declared strongly against urging circumcision upon the Gentiles, yet instead of forbidding the Jews to circumcise their children, he himself had circumcised Timothy because his mother was a Jewess, though his father was a Greek. And taking the accusation in this view the advice they give is very reasonable, that he should go and purify himself that 'all may know that those things whereof they were informed concerning thee are nothing, but that thou thyself walkest orderly, and keepest the law,' ver. 24. They urged him to do no more than what he himself had done on former occasions. For he had shaved his head at Cenchrea, and had a vow upon him. And both his own former practice, and what he now did at Jerusalem was a full vindication of him against the charge advanced against him, that he had absolutely forbidden the Jews to observe the law, and had declared it utterly unlawful for them to observe the Mosaic rites and customs.

To account for this conduct of the apostle Paul and the other apostles, two things are to be considered. The one is, that they knew it was the will of God that the law of Moses with its peculiar rites should be no longer strictly obligatory in point of conscience on the disciples of Jesus: and that Christ by his coming, and by his death, had really superseded that law, and set them free

from the obligation of its ceremonies and ordinances. The other is, that they also knew by the Spirit of God that it was his will that the observation of that law and its peculiar rites should be indulged and tolerated for a while: and that the abrogation of it should not be urged upon the Jews all at once, but by degrees. And the wisdom and reasonableness of this method is very manifest to any one that duly considers the circumstances of the case, and of that time. The whole Jewish nation had the highest veneration for the law of Moses. Nor could it be wondered at, if they did not easily part with a law which they were assured was of divine original, and had been confirmed by such illustrious attestations from heaven, as well as had been the law of their nation for so long a succession of ages. God could indeed have commanded them all at once immediately after Christ's resurrection to lay aside all the Mosaic ceremonies, to which they had been so long accustomed, and could have absolutely forbidden the observation of it; in which case no Christian could with a safe conscience, or consistently with the Christian profession, have observed any of the ceremonies of that law. But this would have been too great a shock, and, joined to their other prejudices arising from Christ's sufferings and crucifixion, and the meanness of his external appearance here on earth, would have proved such an obstacle to their embracing Christianity, as they could scarce have overcome. It seemed therefore but reasonable to indulge them a little as the case was circumstanced, and to remove their prejudices by degrees; which were of such a kind as might well raise scruples in men of sincere and honest minds. And accordingly it pleased God in his great wisdom and goodness so to order it, that that abrogation and repeal of the law of Moses was gradually hinted and signified to them, and they were prepared for it by degrees. The apostles first preached to the Jews, and to them only salvation through Jesus Christ and him crucified, agreeably to our Saviour's own directions who had commanded them to begin at Jerusalem. Afterwards they preached the gospel to the Samaritans, whom the Jews despised as much as they did the Gentiles, Acts viii., and to them was the Holy Ghost given upon their believing in Christ by the imposition of the apostles' hands. This prepared them for what next happened; and that was, that Peter by express revelation was ordered to preach to the devout Gentiles or proselytes of the gate, that is, to those among the Gentiles that worshipped the true God, though they did not observe the rites of the ceremonial law; as in the famous instance of Cornelius. Peter was at the same time taught by a vision from heaven, that the legal distinction between clean and unclean meats was now no longer obligatory; and that the difference of Jews and Gentiles was now to be taken away. And it pleased God to pour forth the Holy Ghost in his extraordinary gifts and operations upon Cornelius, and those that were with him, and that in an immediate manner without the laying on of Peter's hands, as he had done upon the apostles themselves at the beginning. This tended to remove a strong pre-

judice the Jews had entertained, and to convince them that the Gentiles were now to be taken into the same church with themselves, and were to form one sacred society under Jesus Christ. Afterward when the gospel had been preached for some time to the devout Gentiles or proselytes of the gate, it was at last preached to the idolatrous Gentiles: and the apostle Paul was in a more especial manner set apart to that work. And in the mean time the doctrines which he and the other apostles unanimously preached concerning remission of sins, and justification through faith in Christ, concerning his being the only true propitiation for our sins, and his being the Saviour of all men without distinction, whether Jews or Gentiles, that should sincerely believe and obey him, tended to prepare the Jews for the entire abrogation of the Mosaical economy, which followed from the principles they laid down.* And lastly this apostle wrote a whole epistle directed particularly to the Hebrews, the proper design of which is to prove that the legal dispensation is abolished by Jesus Christ. And soon after this the Jewish temple and polity were entirely destroyed, as Jesus had foretold, whereby the exercise of the legal priesthood, and the observation of the Mosaic rites, particularly those relating to sacrifices, was rendered impracticable. Thus it appears in how just and wise a progression the gospel of Jesus was published, and successive degrees of light communicated, and the glorious scheme and design of God gradually unfolded, till the Christian Jews were prepared for receiving it in its full glory and entire harmony. And whilst this design was carrying on, it was agreeable to the will of God, and the designs the divine wisdom had in view, that the apostles should observe the Mosaic rites, lest the throwing them off at once should have created too great a prejudice against them and their doctrine in the minds of the Jews, until the time came, which the apostles knew by special revelation, and by Christ's own express predictions, was near at hand, when that polity was to be destroyed.

Let us now consider the second main point in difference, as this author states it, between St. Paul and the other apostles, which he pretends relates to the law of proselytism; viz. 'Whether the Gentile converts, as a matter of religion and conscience, were bound to comply with the Mosaic law of Proselytism, as the necessary condition upon which the Jews were to maintain communion with them.' see p. 79. And here also he supposes 'a great and very material

* The accounts that were then published by the apostles and apostolical men of the life and discourse of our blessed Saviour, showed that he himself had declared that nothing 'that entereth into the mouth defileth a man,' which was a plain intimation that the Mosaical injunctions concerning the distinction of meats, and by which the difference between Jews and Gentiles was very much kept up, were now to be no longer obligatory. And finally the apostle John, whom this author represents as one of the principal Jewish apostles, and at the head of the Christian Jews, published it to the world that our Lord Jesus had declared, that 'the hour was coming when neither in this mountain, viz. at Mount Gerizim, nor yet at Jerusalem should men worship the Father, but the true worshippers should worship him in spirit and in truth,' John iv. 21, 23, whereby it appeared that the distinction of places, and the typical ritual service established in the law of Moses, were to be abolished under the gospel.

difference between St. Paul and the other apostles, particularly St. Peter.' He asserts, that 'the Jerusalem council enjoined this law of proselytism upon the Gentile converts as necessary, or as a matter of religion and conscience, without which the Christian Jews could not be justified in communicating with them, or receiving them as brethren. That this soon occasioned fresh troubles and disturbances in the church. For St. Paul could never submit to the imposition of this law of proselytism upon his Gentile converts; at least not in the sense of the council—as necessary, as a matter of religion, or as the law of God upon the authority of Moses; though yet he allowed them to comply with it occasionally, as a matter of liberty, and for the sake of peace, to prevent an open rupture with the Christian Jews, pp. 72, 77. He represents St. Paul as not satisfied with the decree of the Jerusalem council; that he looked upon it as a joining two contrary and inconsistent religions; and that he laboured under the disadvantage of being opposed in all his ministry by the whole Jewish nation, and of having a decree of council, standing out against him, passed at Jerusalem by a large assembly of apostolical Christian Jews,' p. 71, and he resumes this subject again, p. 361, and p. 376, &c.

Here the author positively asserts several things for which there is no foundation in the sacred history; though he pretends to great accuracy, and to deliver nothing but what is perfectly agreeable to the memoirs of that great apostle in the Acts, and in his own genuine epistles.

With regard to the Jerusalem council he positively asserts over and over, that they prescribed the things mentioned in their decree, viz. the abstaining from things offered to idols, from things strangled, from blood, and from fornication, as necessary, because it was the law of proselytism enjoined by Moses; and asserts, that it was certainly the sense of that council that the law of proselytism was the law of God given by Moses, and not yet abrogated and repealed, and therefore must be binding in point of religion and conscience. pp. 77, 78. But it is plain that the Jerusalem council could not urge their decree precisely as the law of proselytism enjoined by Moses, because Moses did not give any law of proselytism precisely answering to that decree. For with regard to those proselytes that were to be incorporated with the Jews, and entered into their national inclosure, as our author expresseth it, and who were usually called the proselytes of righteousness, they were according to the Mosaic constitution to be circumcised, and to observe the whole law of Moses, and its peculiar rites: and hence the strictest among the judaizing Christians, such as those mentioned, Acts xv. 1, 5, were for having this law of proselytism observed with regard to those of the Gentiles that were to be taken into the church. They would have them circumcised in order to their acknowledging them as brethren, and as belonging to the same body. But in the council that was convened to judge of this matter St. Peter declared, with whom the other apostles agreed, that as God had put no difference between the Gentiles and Jews, but had given them the Holy Ghost

without their being circumcised, so they ought, without being circumcised or obliged to observe the law, to be regarded by the Christian Jews as their brethren, and as making up one body or sacred society with them in Jesus Christ. So that it is so far from being true, as this writer asserts, p. 361, that they would not allow the Gentiles the privileges of Christ's kingdom except they were proselyted or naturalized, and thereby entered into their national inclosure and separation from the rest of the world: and that therefore Peter, who had the keys, shut the gates of the kingdom against the whole Gentile world that would not submit to the law of proselytism or Jewish naturalization; and that this point was carried in the first council at Jerusalem, by all the Jewish apostles, elders, and brethren, against all St. Paul's remonstrances and earnest endeavours to the contrary:—I say, this is so far from being true, that the very contrary to this is manifestly true; that St. Peter and the whole council carried it, that the Gentiles should not be obliged to submit to the law of proselytism or Jewish naturalization, which necessarily included their being circumcised and obliged to observe the law.

With regard to the proselytes of the gate, as they are usually called, that is, those among the Gentiles that worshipped the true God but were not circumcised, though they were allowed to live among them, they were never regarded as naturalized or entered into their national inclosure: nor doth it appear that the law of Moses required that they should abstain from things strangled and from blood: on the contrary, that law allowed them to eat that which died of itself, and which therefore had the blood in it, Deut. xiv. 21, which was not allowed either to the natural Jews, or to the proselytes of righteousness. It is plain, therefore, that if the Jerusalem council required these things of the Gentile converts, it was not because this was the very law of proselytism enjoined by Moses. For the things required in the apostolical decree were not the things precisely required and insisted upon in that law, either with regard to the proselytes of righteousness, or the proselytes of the gate. Of the former more was required than is urged in that decree; of the latter, not so much. They did not therefore in that prohibition go merely upon the authority and law of Moses. They only declare that it seemed fit to the Holy Ghost, and to them, to lay upon the brethren no greater burden than the things urged in that decree. So that it was they under the guidance of the Holy Ghost, and by his authority, that laid these injunctions upon the Gentile converts, and they did not put them upon them, as what they were bound to by the law of Moses, which they were under no obligation to observe.

If it be inquired, upon what reason they proceeded in this matter, and why it seemed fit to the Holy Ghost, and to them, to lay these injunctions upon the Gentile converts: the circumstances and true state of the case must be considered. Though the Jews were wont to regard the proselytes of the gate, who worshipped the true God without being circumcised, as the pious among the Gentiles, yet they still looked upon them as Gentiles, though not idolaters;

and were so far from regarding them as brethren, or belonging to the same body or church with themselves (as they did the proselytes of righteousness who were circumcised, and observed the whole law), that they would not converse familiarly or eat with them;* see Acts x. 28. xi. 3. But now by the Christian institution the Jews were to regard all those among the Gentiles that believed in Christ and embraced his gospel, as members of the same church, and forming one body with themselves under Christ the Head, without their being circumcised, or obliged to observe the law of Moses at all. This was a new doctrine to the Jews, and was in effect a destroying the peculium of the Jews, and establishing a new constitution, or erecting a new church consisting of Jews and Gentiles, into which it was not necessary to be initiated by circumcision. But though the Gentiles were thus to be admitted to the full enjoyment of all church privileges under the Gospel without being obliged to the Mosaic law, yet it seemed fit to lay some injunctions upon them, without which, as the case then stood, such a near and intimate communion between Jews and Gentiles, as all belonging to one church and sacred society, would have been impracticable. To this end they were to abstain from every thing that had the appearance of countenancing the heathen idolatry; and Dr. Spencer hath taken great pains to show, that the several things prohibited in this decree were regarded as signs of idolatry or ethnicism, and were used among the heathen in their idol-worship.† Of this kind was not only the eating things offered unto idols, but the eating blood and things strangled, both which were things to which the Jews had the highest aversion and abhorrence; and the allowing the Gentile converts to eat those things as the case was then circumstanced, would have absolutely prevented the Jews eating with their Gentile brethren, or having that intimate society and communion with them which was proper to lay the foundation of a true harmony as became members of the same church. And as all manner of impurity was extremely common among the Gentiles, and even an attendant of their idol-worship, it was thought proper to mention this particularly, that as a holy people to the Lord they should abstain from all impurity and uncleanness and unlawful mixtures. For that the word *πορνεία*, fornication, is often used as a general word for all impurity, is very well known.

These are the things expressly mentioned in the apostolical decree. They are all there called necessary things. But it is not declared or explained in what sense they were so. If they were necessary at all upon any account, whether at that time or perpetually, it is sufficient to answer the import of the word. And though they are all comprised in one word 'necessary,' it doth not follow that they are all equally and absolutely necessary. The abstaining from fornication appeared, both from the reason of the thing, and from many express passages of the New Testament, to be of moral and perpetual

* In this the latter constitutions of the Jews had carried it to a greater strictness than the original law of Moses. See Selden *de jure nat. & Gent. lib. ii. cap. 5.*

† See Spencer, *de Legib. Hebr. Lib. ii. dissert. in Acts xv. 20.*

obligation. But if other things mentioned in that decree were only forbidden, because they were looked upon at that time as outward signs of communion with the heathen idolaters in their superstition and false worship, and because they would have proved matter of great scandal and offence to the Jews, and would have absolutely cut off brotherly correspondence between them and the Gentiles, as brethren and of the same body with themselves, this was a valuable end, and sufficient to justify that prohibition, and show the seasonableness and necessity of it at that time. And on this supposition, when the situation of things was altered, the reason of the injunction, and the necessity arising from it, might cease.

But in whatever way we understand that decree, there is not the least proof that ever the apostle Paul counteracted it; or that ever there was the least difference between him and the other apostles on that head. As to fornication, which is forbidden in that decree, it is evident that it is frequently expressly forbidden in St. Paul's epistles, and that prohibition is enforced with arguments that show it to be of perpetual obligation. With regard to meats offered to idols, St. Paul doth not allow the Gentile converts to eat things offered to idols in the idol temple, because that was plainly to countenance idolatry; and he represents it as a being partaker of the table of devils, and as having fellowship with devils. And as to meats in private houses, if they were told that they had been offered unto idols, they were not to eat of them for fear of giving scandal. So that in this sense he thought it necessary to abstain from these things. As to blood and things strangled, the apostle nowhere mentions them in any of his epistles, and therefore it cannot be proved that he ever taught the Gentiles to eat them, nor consequently can it be proved, that in this he contradicted that decree. If his general declarations, that nothing is unclean of itself, that every creature of God is good, and to be received with thanksgiving, and that they were to eat whatsoever was sold in the shambles, asking no question for conscience' sake, be judged an allowance to eat blood, &c. then our Saviour's declaration which St. Matthew and Mark take notice of, that nothing that entereth into the mouth, and passeth into the draught defileth a man, may be equally thought an allowance to eat things strangled and blood. And it may be argued, that the apostles, who knew of this declaration of our Lord, and particularly the apostle Peter, who had been taught by a vision from heaven not to call any thing common or unclean, did not by things necessary in that decree intend to signify that all these things were perpetually necessary in the nature of the thing, but necessary at that time, and in that circumstance of things. And any one that knows any thing of the apostle Paul's doctrine, cannot but be sensible that he thought it necessary in case of giving offence to weak consciences, to abstain from things which, otherwise and in themselves considered, he judged lawful. So that upon the whole it doth not appear but that he entirely approved of that decree, and of the principles upon which it proceeded. This writer himself observeth 'that it was resolved in the Jerusalem council to lay no

farther burden upon the Gentile converts than a few things which were thought necessary by the Holy Ghost, and them, to avoid the appearance of idolatry, and that the Gentile proselytes might not seem to countenance the temple-worship of the heathens,' p. 59. And if this was the necessity intended, it was perfectly agreeable to the sentiments of the apostle Paul. This writer indeed pretends that St. Paul, not submitting to that decree, raised fresh troubles and disturbances in the church. But there is not the least hint of this kind either in the Acts or the Epistles, nor was there ever any accusation brought against him on this account. On the contrary we are expressly told that Paul and Silas, in their progress to visit the churches, as they passed through the cities delivered them the decrees to keep that were ordained of the apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem, Acts xvi. 4. And at his last coming to Jerusalem, when he returned from his great progress in preaching to the idolatrous Gentiles, though St. James and the elders that were with him mention the apostolical decree, they do not say one word of St. Paul's having acted against it, but glorified God for what he had done amongst the Gentiles, Acts xxi. 19—25. And whereas he talks of a very material difference between St. Peter and St. Paul about the law of proselytism, there is not the least account of any difference they ever had on this head. For the difference referred to Gal. ii. doth not properly relate to that matter, nor indeed to any difference of sentiment between those two great apostles. On the contrary, St. Paul blames Peter for having acted in a manner not very agreeable to that doctrine in which they were both agreed, and not very consistent with the design of the apostolical decree, which manifestly was to engage Jews and Gentiles to cultivate a brotherly communion with one another.

Thus after all the stir this author makes about the mighty differences between St. Paul and the other apostles, it appears there was a harmony between them in their doctrines: and that therefore there is no need of considering the pretended difficulty of deciding the controversies between them by miracles. The miracles they wrought all concurred to give an illustrious attestation to the same gospel which was uniformly preached by them all. And whereas he tells us that Timothy was the only teacher in that age that heartily joined with St. Paul, and that St. Peter, John Mark, and Barnabas, and all the other apostles and apostolical teachers, thought themselves obliged at last to separate from St. Paul, because they could not agree to absolve the Jewish converts from their obligation to the Mosaical Law, and left him to preach his own gospel his own way: this is asserted without any foundation in the inspired writings to support it. What was the cause of John Mark's leaving Paul, of which we have an account, Acts xiii. 13, we are not told. But there is not the least hint that it was for any such reason as this writer pretends. And if Barnabas was, as he insinuates, as much offended as Mark, and for the same reason, why did he not then leave him too? instead of which we find him after this joining with Paul in preaching the Gospel throughout the lesser Asia, and suffering persecutions on the

account of it as well as he. And he was ready to have gone with him another progress, and would have taken Mark with him too, which Paul would not suffer, because he had left them abruptly in their former progress. And this, and not any difference between them in doctrine, was the cause of the contention that then arose between Paul and Barnabas. But it is plain from St. Paul's own epistles, that this Mark, whom our author supposes to have entirely separated from him upon the difference between them in doctrines, was, after that separation mentioned Acts xiii. 13, signally helpful to him; and especially in the latter part of St. Paul's life, when his opposition to the law must have been much better known than it could have been at the time that Mark first left him, which was in the beginning of his first progress. In some of his last epistles he calls him one of his fellow-labourers, and fellow-workers unto the kingdom of God; and saith that he had been a comfort to him, and was profitable to him for the ministry, Philem. 24. Col. iv. 10, 11. 2 Tim. iv. 11. And the same Mark is also mentioned by St. Peter with great regard, 1 Pet. v. 13, where he calls him his son. Silas or Silvanus was also a person of eminent note among the Jewish Christians at Jerusalem, as appears from Acts xv. 22, 32. And he went along with St. Paul in his second progress, who joins him and Timothy with himself in the inscriptions of his two Epistles to the Thessalonians; and assures the Corinthians that the gospel preached by all three was entirely the same, and that they perfectly harmonised in it, 2 Cor. i. 19. This is that Silvanus whom St. Peter calls a faithful brother, and whom he sent to confirm the churches, 1 Pet. v. 12. And this is another proof of the great harmony there was between those two great apostles St. Peter and St. Paul. The same persons were assistant to them both, sometimes to one, sometimes to the other, in preaching the same gospel. To which may be added what commendation I mentioned before the great St. Peter gives of St. Paul, and of his writings a little before his own death, 2 Pet. iii. 15, 16. It is evident therefore that when St. Paul sometimes calls the gospel he preached his gospel, it could not be his intention to insinuate that it was a gospel different from what the other apostles preached and taught. For he represents Christians as built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Eph. ii. 20; and speaking of the mystery of calling the Gentiles to be fellow-heirs and of the same body with the Jews, which he represents as made known to him by special immediate revelation, he expressly declares that this mystery was then also revealed unto the holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit, Eph. iii. 2, 3, 5.

There needs nothing more to be said concerning the pretended difference between St. Paul and the other apostles.

But I cannot pass it by without some notice that, notwithstanding the veneration he professes for that great apostle, the representation he makes of his conduct at his trial is such as under pretence of vindicating him insinuates several reflections upon his character. He observes, that the apostle does not own that which was the chief

matter of complaint against him, and the ground of all his persecutions by the Jews, namely that in all their synagogues in Greece and Asia Minor he had maintained that the law was abrogated by Christ's death and resurrection, and that in Christ there was no difference between Jew and Gentile, pp. 67, 68. To which it is sufficient to answer, that it was not the apostle's business to accuse himself. He puts his adversaries upon the proof, and it is evident they were not able to prove the charge they brought against him. Nor was it true in fact, as I have shown, that he had preached in all the synagogues that the Jews were absolved from the obligation of the Mosaic Law. *

The Asiatic Jews* were not capable of making good their accusation against him; and thought therefore to have run him down by general clamours, concerning his raising tumults, and profaning the temple. The defence Paul makes for himself is just and noble, and hath a becoming freedom and boldness in it as well as caution. He denies the charge of sedition and tumult, of profaning the temple, or of having offended against the law, but at the same time never in the least disguised his being a Christian: he freely owns that after the way which they called heresy so worshipped he the God of his fathers, and at the same time declares, what was literally true, that he believed all things which were written in the law and the prophets. He with a noble zeal bore an illustrious testimony to our Lord that he was the Christ, and that he had risen from the dead, and had sent him to preach to the Gentiles; which was the principal thing that provoked the Jews in the first apology he made for himself before them, Acts xxii. 21, 22. And whereas this writer insinuates that till his last defence before Agrippa and Festus, Paul had not owned the resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth, which was the main point that had raised the malice of the Jews against him, but only asserted the resurrection of the dead, in general; which they believed as well as he, p. 67. This is far from being a true representation: for it appears, from the account Festus himself gives Agrippa, that before the apology Paul made in the presence of that prince he had affirmed, not merely the resurrection in general, but the resurrection of Jesus, and that this was the great question between

* The Asian Jews mentioned Acts xxi. 27 were not, as this writer pretends, Christian Jews that believed in Jesus, but they were unbelieving Jews who were enraged at him for preaching up Jesus as the Messiah, and for preaching the gospel to the Gentiles, which they interpreted as an endeavour to draw the people from Moses. And on the same account they also persecuted the other apostles and Christians, as is plain in the case of Stephen, and the apostles James and Peter. It was the unbelieving Jews that were the authors of all the tumults and persecutions that were raised against St. Paul, and not, as this writer asserts, the Jews that professed to believe in Christ. Nor can any thing be more false than that which he concludes his whole account of this matter with, pp. 80, 81, that it is evident from all the memoirs of this great apostle's life in the history of the Acts, and his own genuine epistles, that all his sufferings and persecutions all along arose from his struggling against the superstition of the Christian Jews, and their pretended religious obligations to the law of Moses, which they thought themselves still as much obliged by as before. Whereas not one of the persecutions there mentioned were raised against him by the Christian Jews that denied that Jesus was the Christ.

him and the Jews. Festus tells Agrippa that the Jews had certain questions against Paul of their own superstition, and of one Jesus which was dead, whom Paul affirmed to be alive, Acts xxv. 19. And the connexion there was between the resurrection of Jesus and the general resurrection, both in the truth of the thing, and in St. Paul's own scheme, was such, that the apostle might justly represent himself as called in question about the resurrection of the dead, when he was called in question about the resurrection of Jesus, the best proof and pledge of it. And in fact that was the great reason why the Sadducees, the professed enemies of the resurrection, were so zealous against the Christian scheme. Though we do not hear much of their opposition to Christ before, yet no sooner did the apostles begin to preach Christ's resurrection, but they appeared to be the most zealous adversaries of the gospel. For they saw, that if Christ's resurrection from the dead was believed to be true, it would be a sensible proof of the resurrection and a future state. Thus we are told, Acts iv. 1, 2, that the Sadducees came upon the apostles, being grieved that they taught the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead. And again, v. 17, that the sect of the Sadducees being filled with indignation laid hands on the apostles, and put them in prison. It was not therefore without reason that the apostle Paul declared, that he was called in question concerning the hope and resurrection of the dead; since this was really one chief thing, though not the only one, that stirred up the malice and spite of his enemies, especially of the Sadducees, several of whom he saw in the council, and who were his chiefest and most implacable adversaries, Acts xxiii. 6, 7, 8.

CHAPTER XV.

The author's pretence that the apocalypse is most properly the Christian revelation, and that it is there that we are principally to look for the doctrines of Christianity, considered. There is nothing in that book to countenance the worship of angels, invocation of saints, or prayers for the dead. Salvation is not there confined to the Jews only. His account of the fifth monarchy which he pretends is foretold in that book, shown to be false and absurd. The attempt he makes against the whole canon of the New Testament, under pretence that it was corrupted and interpolated by the Jews, and that Christ's own disciples reported doctrines and facts according to their own false notions and prejudices, examined and disproved.

NOTHING can be more evident than that our author makes use of the term, Christian Jew, with a design to expose our Saviour and his apostles, and the whole New Testament. And the more effectually to answer that design he is pleased to ascribe several senti-

ments to the Christian Jews, and as making up part of what he calls the Jewish Gospel, which he thinks he can prove to be absurd and false, and some of which really are so. And for a proof that these were their doctrines, he refers us, not to the gospels or to the epistles written by the apostles of our Lord, but to the Apocalypse, which he represents as a system of Jewish Christianity, in hopes, I suppose, to take advantage from the obscure and figurative style of that book. He thinks 'Sir Isaac Newton has proved it to be a genuine work of St. John, and that it was written in Nero's time, two or three years before the destruction of Jerusalem,' p. 364. And he tells us, that this book is most 'properly the Christian revelation, or the revelation of Jesus Christ, which is the very title of that book: whereas no other book of the New Testament assumes or claims any such character,' p. 369. But it is evident from the express declaration of the book itself, that it was not so properly and immediately designed to be a revelation of doctrines, as to be a revelation of future events. It is called the 'revelation of Jesus Christ to show unto his servants the things which must shortly come to pass,' chap. i. 1. And again it is called 'this prophecy,' chap. xxii. 19. It is therefore a poor trifling observation, that no other book of the New Testament has the word revelation of Jesus Christ in the title of it. If he could prove that no other book of the New Testament was given by inspiration of God (as the apostle Paul tells us all Scripture is) or was designed to instruct us in the doctrine of Jesus Christ, this would be something to the purpose. And he shows his good will this way, by observing, that the epistles and gospels 'contain nothing but historical accounts of facts, or practical rules and exhortations,' &c. But nothing can be more manifest to any one that ever read those writings, than that they abound with instructions in point of doctrine. And from these writings we should have a full account of the doctrines of Christianity, though no such book as the Apocalypse had ever been written at all. I am satisfied that it is a truly inspired book, and of considerable use. But the authority of the Christian revelation, and the discovery of its doctrines, doth not at all peculiarly depend upon that book; though all that is there said occasionally concerning any of the Christian doctrines, is agreeable to what is delivered in the other books of the New Testament.

But let us examine the account he pretends to give of the doctrines of that book. First he tells us, that 'the Christian Jews soon fell into gross idolatry, and set up a great number of mediators and intercessors with God instead of one.' And this he pretends to prove from the Apocalypse, pp. 364, 365, and again p. 372. That the 'mediatorial worship of saints and angels, and prayers for the dead, are all plainly founded in this book.' To show that the angels are there represented as mediators between God and us, he observes, that the 'twenty-four elders, or principal angels which stood before the throne, are represented as having golden censers in their hands full of incense, which is the prayers of the saints.' But what if the four and twenty elders be only the representatives of the Christian church, and the harps and vials full of odours, be only designed to

be a representation, in the figurative style of prophecy, of the worship paid to God in the church, which is Sir Isaac Newton's interpretation? then the author's inference from it falls to the ground. And that the elders there mentioned are not to be understood, as he would have it, of the principal angels, is manifest, both because the angels are plainly distinguished from the elders, Rev. v. 11, and vii. 11, and because those elders are represented, in their song to the Lamb, as blessing him for having redeemed them 'unto God by his blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation,' chap. v. 9, 10.

There is another passage in that book, though not mentioned by this writer, that seems at first view much more to his purpose than that which he produces, viz. that concerning the angel which 'stood at the altar, having a golden censer, to whom was given much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints;' and that the 'smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand,' Rev. viii. 3, 4. But the word angel admits of so many senses in that book, that no argument can be drawn from it. The bishops or ministers of the churches are called the angels of the churches. An angel is represented as having the 'everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people,' chap. xiv. 6, 7. Where by the angel is meant all those persons that were employed to preach the gospel, and to call men to the true worship of God. And as heaven, and the temple, and altar there often signify, in this prophecy, the visible Christian church on earth, and the worship there performed; so the angel 'standing at the altar, having a golden censer, and offering up the prayers of the saints upon the golden altar, with much incense,' may be designed to signify no more than this, that the ministers of the Christian church offered up to God their own prayers and those of the people in solemn acts of public worship, and that those prayers found a gracious acceptance with God. Thus when the Psalmist saith, Psalm cxli. 2, 'Let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense,' it signifies no more than if he had said, Let my prayers be favourably accepted; there is nothing in this interpretation but what is agreeable to the style of this book. But if we should suppose that the angel here is spoken of in allusion to the high priest under the law on the day of expiation, then it is the Lord Jesus Christ that is here represented by the angel, as being the only High Priest of the Christian church in the constant language of the New Testament. And his being here called an angel is no objection against this, since he is represented under a variety of images in this book. And since this author grants St. John to have been the author of the Apocalypse, it is but reasonable that the figurative language of this book should be understood in a conformity to the declared sentiments of this great apostle. Now we find him elsewhere plainly signifying, that our Lord Jesus Christ is the only advocate with the Father, as well as the only propitiation for our sins. 1 John ii. 1, 2. And in his gospel he represents our

Saviour as encouraging his disciples to ask the Father in his name, as the only Mediator through whom their prayers would be accepted. John xiv. 6—13. xvi. 23—26. To which it may be added, that this very book of the Revelation contains as express a declaration against the worship of angels, as any that is to be found in the whole scripture. See Rev. xix. 10, xxii. 9, where the angel twice forbids John to worship him. Our author endeavours to evade this, by saying, that ‘the worship of angels was then only mediatorial, and not immediate and direct; and therefore the angel refused St. John’s immediate direct adoration, when he was going to pay it him.’ But certainly St. John never intended to worship the angel as the supreme God, or as the Lamb; it was only an inferior worship he intended to render him. In the transports of his gratitude and respect he threw himself at his feet, and was for paying him an inferior religious homage; and yet even this the angel would not allow, but expressly forbade it, as St. Peter had done in a like case to Cornelius, to show how far we should be from doing any thing that looks like rendering a religious worship to inferior beings; adding a reason for it, because he was his fellow-servant, a servant of God and of Jesus Christ as well as he.

What our author offers to prove, that this book teacheth the ‘invocation of saints at their tombs,’ and ‘prayers for the dead,’ hath not so much as the shadow of an argument. He observes, that ‘St. John saw the souls of them that had been slain for the word of God, crying out, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?’ chap. vi. 9, 10. From whence he argues, that ‘if the departed saints and martyrs are still in such a state of earnest desire and expectation of a complete deliverance, we ought surely to pray for them as they do for us, and even pray to them, or request their prayers and intercessions with God for us, whenever we apprehend them present.’ p. 396. Let us grant that the saints above, or church triumphant, do pray to God in behalf of the church militant on earth, for putting a stop to persecuting rage and violence, and for promoting the interests of his kingdom, of piety, righteousness, and charity among men; there is nothing in this but what may well be supposed, nor did any understanding protestant ever deny it. But says he, ‘then we ought to pray for them as they do for us:’ and if by praying for them be meant no more than our praying that the time may be hastened when their and our felicity and glory shall be completed at the resurrection, when the whole general assembly and church of the first-born shall be fully accomplished and glorified: such a communion as this between that part of the church and family of God which is yet militant on earth, and that part of it which is triumphant above, they concerned for us, and earnestly desiring our happiness and welfare, and we rejoicing in their present glory, and desiring the completion of it, may justly be admitted, and is full of consolation. But then he adds, that ‘we ought also to pray to them, or request their prayers and intercessions with God for us, whenever we apprehend them present.’ Our author wisely adds

this. For this shows the impropriety of applying ourselves to any particular saints departed, because we cannot know that they are present with us; and to pray to them as if they were every where present, would be an ascribing to them the peculiar perfections of God; or, if they were present, it would be improper for us to bow down before them with all the marks of religious homage and reverence, as is done in the church of Rome: for this we find John was not suffered to do to the angel when really present.

But he tells us, p. 367, that 'the great and dangerous part of the scheme with regard to these primitive Christian Jews was, that they confined salvation to themselves;' that it is evident the author of this book confined salvation to the Jews only. For when the 'saints came to be marked and entered into the book of life, there are none marked and entered but Jews only, twelve thousand out of every tribe; and no Gentile was to be saved,' &c. p. 372. But no argument can be drawn from the calling those that were sealed by the names of the tribes of Israel; since, agreeably to the prophetic style, by Israel is signified the Christian church, as in this very book by Babylon is signified Rome; because as Babylon was the great persecuting power under the Old Testament, so Rome should be the great persecutor of the church under the New. So the false seducers to idolatry are called by the name of Jezebel, chap. xi. 20, and Rome is called Sodom, and Egypt the 'great city where our Lord was crucified,' chap. ii. 8. And in the same figure the church is called 'Jerusalem and the Holy City;' as it is also by St. Paul, 2 Gal. iv. 6. Heb. xii. 22. And that it could not be the intention of St. John, in the expressions produced by this writer, to confine salvation to the Jews only, is evident, not only because there are as plain declarations, as any in the whole New Testament, to be found in his writings, concerning Christ's being the Saviour of the world, or of all mankind; for which see the passages I had occasion to cite before, John iii. 16. x. 16. xi. 52. 1 John ii. 2. But because no expressions can be stronger than those that are used in this very book, to signify that some of all nations should be saved; I shall only produce one passage to this purpose, which is very clear and express. It is in chap. vii. 9, where, speaking of the happiness of the saints, he represents them as a 'great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues;' and then goes on to describe their blessed state. It is observable that this is immediately said after the account that is given of the 144,000 that were sealed out of all the 'tribes of Israel.' Now if we should suppose the 'great multitude' of saints mentioned ver. 9, to be different from the 144,000 sealed ones, then even allowing the author's own supposition, that those were to be understood literally of Jewish converts, it would prove, that a great number of all nations would be saved besides them. But if this great multitude of saints of all nations, &c. mentioned ver. 9, be supposed to be the very same persons that are represented before, as having been sealed out of all the 'tribes of Israel,' then this shows, that by the 'tribes of Israel we are there to understand the

Christian church of all nations, mystically called Israel in the prophetic style. Our author indeed pretends, that by 'all nations and kindreds,' &c. we are only to understand the Jews gathered out of all nations. And at that rate, whatever expressions had been used to signify that the gospel salvation should extend to all nations, he might still have pretended that it was to be understood only of the Jews. But whereas this phrase of 'people, and kindreds, and tongues, and nations,' is frequently used in this book, it never once signifies the Jews of all nations, as will appear to any one that will consult the passages where this phrase is used. Chap. xi. 9. xii. 8. xiii. 3—7. xiv. 6—8. xvii. 15.

The account our author pretends to give of the 'fifth monarchy' foretold in the book of the Revelation, that 'was immediately to succeed the destruction of the fourth or Roman monarchy,' which was to happen in that very age, is entirely misrepresented. There is nothing in this book that looks like erecting a monarchy or empire of the Jews above all other nations, in which 'they were to glut their revenge upon the Gentile world,' which is the idea he gives of that fifth monarchy, as he calls it. Those that are described as saints in this book, and that shall be partakers of the happiness and kingdom there described, are represented to be those of all nations that 'keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus,' Rev. xiv. 12, and that suffered 'for the word of God, and the testimony of Jesus,' chap. xx. 4. With regard to the New Jerusalem there described, 'the nations ($\tauὰ \xi \nu \eta$, a word commonly used to signify the Gentiles) of them that are saved,' are represented as 'walking in it,' chap. xxi. 24. And the 'leaves of the tree of life' are said to be 'for the healing of the nations,' chap. xxii. 3. And no Jew would ever have made use of such expressions to signify that the Jews only should share in the benefits of that glorious and happy state.

Our author would have all that is said in the Apocalypse concerning the New Jerusalem, to be understood literally of a real city, that was to come down from heaven, and to be built without hands 12,000 furlongs, or 1500 miles square, &c. and that all the Gentiles should be forced to bring all their riches into it, as contributions and marks of homage to the Jewish Messiah, who was to reign there a thousand years. And he might as justly take every thing that is said in the whole book in a strict literal sense. But by such an attempt, instead of exposing the book of the Revelation, which is undoubtedly his design, he would effectually expose his own absurdity. It is manifest to every one that considers the figurative style that is every where preserved throughout this book, that this description of the new Jerusalem is only designed to be a figurative representation of a very glorious and happy state, of which good men should be partakers, and the felicity and glory of which is described by images drawn from those things that are usually accounted the most splendid and magnificent here on earth; and yet at the same time it is intimated, that the happiness and glory of it shall be heavenly and spiritual, chiefly consisting in God's gracious presence, and in the

purity and holiness of the blessed inhabitants, and the manifestations of the divine love and favour towards them. See Rev. xxi. 3, 4, &c.

And whereas this writer, in order to show that the prophecy of this book is false, would have it, that all the events there foretold are represented as things that were immediately to be accomplished in that very age, because it is said to be a revelation of things which were shortly to come to pass: it is evident from the book itself, that the intention of this could not be to signify that all the events there prophesied of were shortly to come to pass, for among other things there prophesied of is the final judgment, when all the dead, small and great, shall stand before God, and be judged according to their works, Rev. xxii. 12. And this is represented there; as not to happen till the thousand years of Christ's reign on earth were past. So that it is plain, that when it is said to be a revelation of things shortly to come to pass, it can only be intended to signify, that the things there prophesied of were to begin immediately to be accomplished. These expressions show where the fulfilment of that prophecy should begin, not where it should end. And accordingly it contains a series of events to begin from that time, and to end with the general judgment.

It would carry me too far, to enter into the Apocalyptic computations. Any one who would see them well handled, may, amongst others, consult a good book lately published by Mr. Lowman.* But whereas this writer, in order to show that the 1260 days there mentioned are to be understood of so many natural days, pretends that there is no foundation in scripture for taking a day for a year, in the interpretation of those prophecies; and that the Jews had no such computation as putting a day for a year, though they had annual weeks. And therefore when weeks are mentioned, as in the famous prophecy of Daniel, it may signify weeks of years, as well as weeks of days. I would only observe, that if weeks, which in the proper literal signification signifies seven days, may be understood to signify seven years; I see no reason in the world, why a day may not be put for a year. For if it be said, a day in itself signifies a natural day, and nothing else, so a week in itself signifies seven days, and nothing else, and is always so understood in scripture when put alone without the addition of years, except in the style of prophecy, and if in that style, by the author's own acknowledgment, a week, which properly signifies seven days, may be put for seven years, though it is not in the prophecy itself expressly declared to be a week of years; then in the same style a day may be put for a year. And that it must be understood so in the prophecy of the Apocalypse is, I think, manifest by internal arguments drawn from the prophecy itself. For any one that carefully considers what is represented as happening in that twelve hundred and sixty days, or forty and two months, will easily be convinced, that three years and an half is too small a period for so many and great events, which take up near one half of the whole prophecy †. Nor

* Paraphrase and Notes on the Revelation, 4to. † See Lowman on the Revelation, p. 103

do I see, upon this supposition, where is the necessity of speaking so often of the faith and patience of the saints, if the persecuted state of the church were to be of such a short duration.

It is not to be wondered at, that there is a considerable obscurity with regard to many circumstances of the prophecies in that book, and particularly as to the precise time of the dates of the events. Several reasons might be offered to show that it was not proper that they should be more distinctly marked out: but yet there is such a plain description of an idolatrous and persecuting power that was to arise in the church; the seat where that power was to be fixed is so plainly pointed out, viz. Rome, and that it was to be under a different form of government in the Roman Empire from that which subsisted in St. John's time, and after the rise of ten kingdoms, into which that empire was to be divided, which did not happen till many hundred years after this prophecy: the arts of seduction and deceit that should be made use of, the general spreading of the apostacy, and the grievous sufferings to which the faithful few should be exposed, are so distinctly and strongly described: and we have seen all this so wonderfully accomplished by a power the most strange that ever was in the world, and in which all these characters are to be found, that it is no small confirmation of the divine authority of this prophecy. And it is also foretold that after the destruction of this power, there shall be a glorious state of the church, a state of universal purity and peace, to continue a thousand years: our author may call this a fifth monarchy if he pleases, but let him prove that there is any thing in this unbecoming the wisdom and goodness of God. The prospects of it cannot but be very refreshing to every good man that hath any zeal for the glory of God, or for the good of mankind, and for the interests of true religion and righteousness in the world.

But the author objects that this fifth monarchy was to be founded in blood and destruction as the four monarchies before had been successively founded, p. 367, or as he expresseth it, p. 372, that not one Gentile was to be saved: they were all to be given up to the sword, plague, and famine; or such judgments by which God had determined to destroy the fourth to make way for the fifth monarchy, which looks very unlike converting the whole world by argument and reason, and by the motives and inducements of beneficence and love, under a kingdom or state of government, that must depend upon inward conviction and free choice. His insinuations that the Jews only were to be partakers of the benefits of this kingdom have been already sufficiently exposed: but it will be easily allowed, that it is plainly signified in this book that God, after having long borne with them, would inflict severe judgments on his obstinate enemies, who had persecuted his faithful servants with so much cruelty and rage, and had seduced the nations by their wicked arts, and propagated iniquity, vice, and idolatry. This writer here seems to think it is a breach of liberty of conscience for God himself to inflict plague, famine, &c. upon the wicked opposers of his authority and laws: and for aught I know, he may think it a breach of liberty,

and inconsistent with God's governing his creatures by love, to punish the wicked at all either in this world or in the next. But though not to punish the wicked might seem to be a lenity and indulgence to them, yet, which is far worse, it would be a cruelty to good men. It would be a subverting the order and welfare of the moral world, and a suffering vice and wickedness to ravage without control, which would be absolutely inconsistent with a wise and good government. I would fain know of this benevolent author, who is afraid of God's punishing the obstinately wicked, because this would be very unlike converting the world by inducements of beneficence and love, under a kingdom that must depend upon inward conviction and free choice; I would know of him what room there would be for men's acting in religion upon inward conviction and free choice, if God should always suffer persecuting powers to prevail, and set no bounds to their rage. How the punishing and destroying such powers, or which is the same thing, putting a stop to tyranny and persecution, is the way to hinder free choice, he would do well to explain. On the contrary it is evident that the removing such idolatrous persecuting powers is necessary, in the nature of things, to make way for such a happy state of government where truth and love and benevolence must reign.

Thus I have considered our author's objections against the Apocalypse, one of the sacred books of the New Testament. But he is not content with this. He endeavours as far as in him lies to destroy the authority of the whole canon of the New Testament. He represents it as so full of corruptions and interpolations, that it is not 'at all to be depended upon: that the Christian Jews had the revising and publishing that canon in their own hands, and altered it as they pleased in that very age: and that as they left it, and as it now stands, it is a system of Christian Judaism, a jumble of two inconsistent religions; yea that Christ's own disciples reported every thing that Jesus did or said according to their own prejudices, and are therefore not to be depended on for a just account either of doctrines or facts.' see p. 440, 441.

I shall not repeat what I have elsewhere offered to show that never were there more unexceptionable witnesses than the apostles, and that the New Testament writings have all the marks of genuine purity and integrity that any writings can have, and that it was not in the power of any persons if they had been willing, to have introduced a general corruption into those writings* either with regard to the doctrines or facts. I shall only observe at present, that the supposition this writer makes of their being corrupted by the Jews, those very Jews who he tells us would have crucified a thousand Messiahs, rather than take in the Gentiles as partakers in the kingdom with the primitive elect people of God; and who at last, being disappointed in Jesus set up another Messiah, one Barchochab, pp. 374, 440, is the wildest, the most extravagant supposition in the world. For not to urge, that it was not in their

* See answer to Christianity as Old as the Creation, vol. ii, Chap. 2, and 5.

power to have corrupted the original sacred writings of the New Testament which were immediately dispersed far and wide among the Gentile churches, we have a manifest proof in fact that they did not interpolate and corrupt them in favour of their own Jewish notions and prejudices, because none of those which this writer represents as their notions and doctrines, and as making up what he calls a Jewish gospel, such as the doctrines concerning Christ's being only a temporal Messiah, and national deliverer of the Jews, concerning the observation of the law of Moses as absolutely necessary to justification and acceptance with God, concerning the worshipping of angels, and setting up many mediators and intercessors instead of one, concerning the confining salvation to the Jews only, and raising them to a height of power and dominion over all nations, that they might be thoroughly revenged on the Gentile world; I say, none of those doctrines are to be found in the New Testament writings. And to imagine that the Christian Jews, as he calls them, should interpolate and corrupt the New Testament writings in order to accommodate them to their own notions and prejudices, and yet should leave the entire scheme of religion there laid down quite contrary to those notions and prejudices, and neither alter those passages that are most inconsistent with those notions, nor insert any passages in favour of them, is the most absurd and unaccountable supposition that ever was made.

But our author is pleased to instance in some things which he looks upon to be proofs of such interpolations and corruptions. Such he would have those passages to be that relate to the divinity of our Saviour; but he would do well to tell us what inducements the Christian Jews could have to foist in such interpolations. The Ebionites, Cerinthians, and others who called themselves Christians, and yet urged the necessity of the observation of the law of Moses, would never have inserted those passages, but rather the contrary, since they did not acknowledge our Lord's divinity. And besides, it is evident that no part of the New Testament affords stronger passages to this purpose than are to be found in the writings of St. Paul. But certainly if we should suppose that the Christian Jews had it in their power to have corrupted his epistles (which is a most absurd supposition) it would have appeared by their altering or corrupting some of the passages that seem to be strongest against the obligation of the law of Moses, and that relate to the Gentiles being taken in as fellow-heirs and members of the same body: but the whole frame of his epistles bears the plain characters of genuine purity and integrity. Another instance he brings is, that in favour of their old national prejudices, Christ's own disciples made him a false prophet, they made him prophesy of the end of the world, and of his second coming to judgment, as a thing very shortly to happen during that present generation, p. 440. And he observes farther, that they expected Christ's second coming in that very age or generation, with all the powers of heaven to restore the kingdom to the house of David, in an everlasting succession of power and dominion over all nations to the end of the world, p. 441. But no

where do any of the apostles assign the precise time of Christ's coming to the general judgment; on the contrary, they plainly let us know that the exact time of it was not revealed to them. The coming they speak of, as foretold by our Lord to happen in that very age, is his coming, not to restore the kingdom to the house of David in the Jewish sense, and to raise the Jews to a height of power and dominion over all nations, as this writer is pleased to represent it; but to destroy Jerusalem, and to put an utter end to that state and polity, and inflict the most dreadful punishment and desolation upon them that ever was inflicted in any age, or upon any nation. And this is so far from making Christ a false prophet, that it furnisheth a glorious proof among many others that might be produced of his divine mission. And it is remarkable, that though they assure us that our Lord so clearly foretold the utter destruction of the city and temple of Jerusalem, yet when they give us an account of this, they never add the least hint of his foretelling that the kingdom should be restored to the Jews, and that they should be fully revenged on the Gentiles, which one should think they would have done if they had interpolated these predictions in favour of their own national prejudices.

Our author farther pretends that Christ's disciples ascribed several miracles to him, in which there could have been only an exertion of power without wisdom or goodness, but as he does not condescend to mention them, I need not take any particular notice of this insinuation. I shall only observe, that the miracles they relate are things which they themselves heard and saw, yea, which were done in open view of multitudes, and even of their most watchful and malicious enemies. And the accounts were published in the very age in which those facts were said to be done, and when it would have been the easiest thing in the world to have detected and contradicted them if they had not been true. And indeed, never were there, all things considered, more credible witnesses. They appeared by their whole conduct to be men of great probity and simplicity. The doctrine they preached, and which was confirmed by those miracles, was contrary to all their most rooted and favoured prejudices, and former notions of things. They themselves received that doctrine on the credit of the facts they relate, and to which they were witnesses. And they persevered in their accounts of those facts, and in their profession of that doctrine, with an unparalleled constancy, and even with a wonderful satisfaction and joy of mind, under the most grievous sufferings, and at length sealed their testimony with their blood. Nor is it conceivable to any that impartially considers these things, and the pure and self-denying scheme of religion they taught, upon what other principles they could proceed in all this, than what they themselves professed, a regard to the glory of God, and to the good of mankind, and an earnest desire of promoting true religion, piety, and virtue in the world, together with the hopes of a glorious reward and happiness in a future state. And the being acted by these principles is absolutely inconsistent with their being imposters and deceivers; who put a deliberate solemn cheat upon

mankind in the name of God, and witnessed to facts which they themselves knew to be false. And our author himself, after putting a case which pretty exactly answers to that of the apostles, seems to acknowledge, that it is very probable that men qualified and acting as is here supposed could have no design to deceive us. See p. 90—93.

CHAPTER XVI.

The Moral Philosopher sets up for rectifying the errors of Christians with regard to some of the particular doctrines of Christianity. His objections against the doctrine of Christ's satisfaction considered. There is nothing in it contrary to justice. The fullness of the satisfaction not inconsistent with a free pardon. It doth not rob God of the glory of his mercy, and give the whole praise to Christ. The pretence that Christ's satisfaction is needless, because repentance alone is sufficient without it, examined. It doth not destroy the necessity of personal repentance and obedience, but establisheth it. Christ's prayer to the Father that the cup might pass from him not inconsistent with the notion of his dying for the sins of the world. The author's assertion that there was no such thing as vicarious sacrifices under the law of Moses; and the way he takes to account for Christ's being called a propitiation, examined. The representation he makes of the gospel doctrine of pardon upon repentance. His absurdity and inconsistency in this shown. His attempt against the positive precepts of Christianity, considered. The arguments he draws from the differences among Christians, to prove that none of the doctrines of revealed religion are of any certainty or use to mankind, shown to be vain and inconclusive. His encomium on moral philosophy. The conclusion.

I HAVE now gone through the several objections of our pretended moral philosopher as far as they affect the authority of the Holy Scriptures in general, whether of the Old Testament or of the New. It doth not properly come within my design to enter upon the consideration of the particular doctrines of Christianity, especially those that are controverted among Christians. I might therefore entirely pass by those parts of our author's book, where he pretends to set up for rectifying the errors and mistakes that have obtained among Christians with regard to some of the doctrines of the gospel. He is certainly a very unfit person to bring Christians to the true original Christianity, and to the purity of doctrine as laid down in the New Testament, who does all he can to subvert and destroy the authority of those sacred writings. There is no one doctrine against which he exerts himself with so much force and vigour, as that of Christ's satisfaction. He is pleased on this occasion to give us a specimen of his sermonising faculty, as 'a sample how the clergy ought to preach, and what doctrines they are to instruct us in as from Christ and the apostles.' And the discourse he entertaineth

us with on this subject lasts, with digressions, for about a hundred pages together. If its confusion and tediousness were its principal faults, I should not have endeavored to disturb the good opinion he seems to have of his own performance; but the peculiar air of insolence and scorn with which he treats a doctrine that hath been generally thought by Christians to be plainly founded in the New Testament, and the bitter reproach he pours forth upon it, deserves some animadversion. He not only represents it as a most 'absurd and irrational doctrine,' but as 'the stronghold of sin and Satan in the Christian world,' p. 146, and thinks he has 'said enough to subvert and destroy this hypothesis under all the appearances and constructions of it among our several schematists and faith-mongers,' p. 444. I shall therefore take so much notice of what he hath advanced on this head as may suffice to show that there is no occasion for all this boasting and confidence, and that this doctrine may still stand its ground notwithstanding the attacks of this formidable writer.

The true notion of Christ's satisfaction, or Christ dying for our sin, in general, is this, 'That it is a provision made by the wisdom of God to dispense his grace and favor towards guilty creatures in such a way as doth, at the same time, secure the majesty of his government with the authority of his law, and show forth his justice and purity.' And I believe there is scarce any man but will own that if such a way can be found out, it is better and more becoming the wise and righteous Governor of the world, than it would be to pardon and restore sinners absolutely to favor in a way of mere prerogative, without any such provision for maintaining the rights of his government, and vindicating the honor and authority of his laws. The gospel revelation exhibits very extraordinary displays of the divine grace and mercy towards sinners of the human race. It not only contains a full and free offer of the pardon of all our sins, how great and heinous soever, upon our repentance and amendment, but it promiseth a complete felicity of body and soul to continue to all eternity, as the reward of our imperfect obedience in this state of trial; a reward transcending what we could have pretended to have merited, if we had never sinned at all. But at the same time we are there informed that all these inestimable blessings, pardon, and peace, and eternal life, are only conferred upon us through Jesus Christ, as the great appointed Mediator, who according to the Father's will took upon him our nature, and gave himself up to the most grievous sufferings, and to death itself, to make atonement for our sins, and to 'obtain eternal redemption for us.' And nothing can furnish a more awful and affecting proof of God's righteous abhorrence of sin, and the steady regard he hath to the majesty of his government, and the authority of his laws, than that when his infinite grace and mercy inclined and determined him to pardon, and restore his offending creatures, and raise them to the highest felicity upon their repentance, and sincere though imperfect obedience, he would not do it upon any less consideration than this, that his own Son should 'give himself for us an offering and a sacrifice

for our sins; and that he would not allow such guilty creatures as we are an immediate access to him in our own names, but only through the mediation and intercession of that great Redeemer, who suffered and died for us, the 'just for the unjust,' that he might bring us unto God. This gives the highest possible weight to the new covenant. And when the blessings of it are dispensed in this method, it hath a manifest tendency to prevent our abusing those glorious displays of his goodness and mercy that are made to us in the gospel. For since God would not pardon and restore even penitent sinners to his favor without so extraordinary an expedient for vindicating the authority of his government and laws, this shows that if we reject the grace of the covenant, and the terms upon which the benefits of it are now offered to us, we have no farther favor or mercy to hope for: 'there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin, (for we cannot expect another sacrifice equal to that which we have rejected) but a certain fearful looking for of judgment,' &c. So that God hath taken care to manifest his rectoral justice and hatred against sin, even in the very methods of our reconciliation. And we are taught in the gospel still to have the blood and sacrifice of Christ in view, whilst we are receiving the greatest mercies and benefits from God, that we may not forget his justice and purity whilst we experience his rich grace and mercy.

The objections of our moral philosopher against the doctrine of Christ's satisfaction are of various kinds. I shall take notice of the principal of them, and those upon which he seems to lay the greatest stress.

'That God should punish the innocent for the guilty,' saith he, 'and spare the guilty for this very reason, because an innocent person has suffered what they ought to have suffered, is a strange doctrine: but stranger still that such a subversion of all moral government, and inverting the course of all rectoral justice, should be necessary to satisfy that very justice,' p. 148. He has this over again, p. 222, where he calls it, by way of ridicule, a 'most amazing and stupendous projection, beyond the comprehension of men and angels.'

But doth not this writer himself allow that Christ was perfectly pure and innocent in himself; and yet that by the will of the Father he was subjected to the most grievous sufferings, and was treated 'as if he had been sinner, and thereby as it were put himself in the place of sinners?' p. 225, and that all this was for our benefit? From whence it follows, that it was not unsuitable to the divine justice, to inflict grievous sufferings on a person perfectly pure and innocent, for the sake and benefit of guilty sinful creatures, and with a view to promote their welfare and happiness. And if this be allowed, I cannot see what foundation there is for the mighty clamors that are raised against the doctrine of Christ's satisfaction on this head, under pretence that it supposeth an innocent person to suffer for the guilty. If it be said, that though Christ suffered for our good, he did not suffer in the stead of sinners, or as a punishment for their sins; I cannot see why it should be thought unjust

in God to lay sufferings upon Christ, considered as an innocent person who had voluntarily undertaken to suffer instead of the guilty, that they might be pardoned and saved, when it is not thought unjust to lay the same sufferings upon him, though perfectly innocent without any such consideration. Our author owns that Christ, though innocent, suffered, but he will not allow that his sufferings were penal, as if the calling them afflictions rather than punishments altered the nature of them, or made them to be less grievous and painful to the suffering person. It is true that the charging an innocent person with crimes which he was not guilty of, and then compelling him against his own consent to suffer for the crimes of others, would both be cruel and unjust in the person inflicting that punishment; and would render the sufferings of the person thus punished much more grievous than if he had suffered the same evils without any such consideration, but merely as calamities that had befallen him. But if we should suppose an innocent person to suffer for the faults of others, the punishment of which he had, from a noble principle of love and kindness to the guilty persons, taken upon himself, that the offenders might be spared and freed from punishment, this certainly would not render the evils and sufferings he endured on that account, more grievous or afflictive to him, than if he had suffered the same evils merely as calamities, or as a trial and exercise of his patience and submission without any such view at all. Yea his sufferings may be justly supposed to be less grievous and afflictive to him on that supposition, than otherwise they would be, because of the happy effects they would produce for the benefit of others, as well as because on this supposition they were what the person himself had freely undertaken for valuable ends.

But still it will be urged, that the suffering of such an innocent person for the guilty could not be properly a satisfaction to justice. To which I answer, that if justice were merely an appetite of revenge against the particular person that had offended, then it could not be satisfied but by his personal punishment, and in no case could the punishment of another be accepted for him. But the justice of God is only a wise and steady will of vindicating and preserving the honor and authority of his laws and government, an unalterable resolution to act as becomes the wise and righteous Governor of the world, for the maintaining of order and the universal good, by keeping up, by all proper methods, an awe of his authority, an abhorrence of sin, and a fear of offending him in the minds of his creatures. And if the dispensing pardon and salvation to guilty creatures, through Christ's suffering and dying for our sins, answers these great and valuable ends, it satisfies his justice in the properest sense in which that phrase can be used with regard to the Deity.

The reason of inflicting punishments in general is not merely to exercise revenge upon the guilty person, or to take pleasure in his pain or misery, but to vindicate the authority of the laws, to deter persons from transgressing them, and to preserve order and good government in the world: and as these ends cannot be ordinarily

answered but by the personal punishment of the offender himself, therefore this is ordinarily necessary. But if a case may happen in which these ends may be answered by another person's interposing to suffer instead of the guilty, no reason in the nature of things can be produced to prove that in such a case such a substitution might not be accepted or that it would be unjust in that case to lay upon such a person, though in himself innocent, the punishment or sufferings which he voluntarily took upon him to endure for the sake of the guilty. And this would be beyond all reasonable exception, if it could be so ordered as to tend upon the whole to the glory and advantage even of the suffering person himself, by recompensing so noble and generous an act of kindness and benevolence; and if at the same time the authority of the government be in this way effectually manifested and displayed, and the majesty of the laws vindicated, and the main ends of punishment obtained. Now all these conditions manifestly concur in the case of our Lord Jesus Christ suffering for sinners. For in this method, as the greatest mercy is shown to the sinners themselves who obtain the pardon of their sins, and are raised to the highest glory and felicity upon their repentance and sincere though imperfect obedience; so there is an awful display made of the majesty of God's government and the authority of his laws, in that he would not pardon and restore sinners to favor without the intervention of a Mediator of such eminent dignity, who was himself to undergo the most grievous sufferings in the stead and upon the account of the offenders, in order to their redemption. And at the same time no irreparable injury is done to the suffering person himself, who both freely consented and undertook thus to suffer for sinners, and is now, as the reward of his sufferings, crowned with glory and honour, exalted in that very nature in which he suffered to the highest degree of glory and felicity.

But our author farther objects, on the other hand, that if we suppose justice to be satisfied, there is no room for the exercise of pardoning mercy, and that the notion of satisfaction is absolutely inconsistent with a free pardon. For if 'the satisfaction be full and complete, it cannot reasonably be refused, and must entitle the debtor or offender to an acquitment in law, which acquitment in that case is an act of justice, and not to be considered as a pardon or an act of grace. But where the satisfaction is not thus full and complete, it is no satisfaction and good for nothing.' To this purpose is his reasoning from p. 148 to p. 153, where he also endeavours to show that the supposing God himself to have found out and contrived this satisfaction doth not at all alter the case, or render it an act of grace and mercy. The whole of what is there offered proceeds upon this supposition; that there is an exact parallel between the satisfaction Christ made to his heavenly Father for the sins of mankind, and a pecuniary surety's paying the money to the creditor on behalf of the debtor. In which case it will be easily acknowledged that the acquitment of the debtor by the creditor is an act of justice; and that the creditor doth not properly remit any

thing at all, or exercise any act of mercy or generosity to the debtor, but all the obligation is to the surety. And if the creditor should himself contrive to find out some person that would pay him the money instead of the debtor who was insolvent, this would not be so much a proof of his kindness and compassion to the debtor, as of his own cunning contrivance to get his money. But if this writer were as well versed in this controversy as he pretendeth to be, he could not but know that the ablest defenders of the doctrine of Christ's satisfaction have maintained that it is in several respects very different from the satisfaction made by a pecuniary surety to the creditor, by paying him his money. And the absurdity of arguing from the one of these to the other hath been often shown. The satisfaction made by Christ suffering for our sins, is properly an expedient fixed upon by the wise and righteous Governor of the world for dispensing his mercy to penitent sinners of the human race, in such a way as may at the same time vindicate the authority of his laws, and preserve the rights and dignity of his government. And on this supposition we may be sure, that if he fixeth upon any expedient, it will be such as is fitted to answer the end proposed by it, and in this sense will be a sufficient satisfaction. But the sufficiency of the satisfaction taken in this view, that is, its being fitted to answer the end proposed by it, which is, to preserve the reverence due to God's authority and laws, and to manifest his glorious greatness, justice, and purity, at the same time that he exerciseth the highest mercy to the sinner; is indeed a proof of his great rectoral wisdom, but doth not at all diminish the freedom of his mercy. The pardon is as free to the offenders, and is as much the effect of his grace and goodness, as if it had been given absolutely without any such provision or expedient at all. And this particular way of doing it, by giving his own Son to suffer in our stead, is a more glorious proof of his rich grace and goodness (and therefore still spoken of in Scripture as the most wonderful instance of his love to mankind that can possibly be conceived) than if he had pardoned sinners by a mere act of his absolute prerogative without any such satisfaction at all. It is still true that eternal life is the free gift of God to undeserving sinners, with this enhancing circumstance, that in order to open a way for conferring it upon us in a manner suited to the glory of his government and moral excellencies, and the order and general good of the moral world, he gave his Son to suffer and die for our sins, and confers this life upon us through his blood and mediation.

It is therefore far from being true, which our author urges against this doctrine, that in this method all 'our thanks and praises must be due primarily and chiefly to the person who has made this satisfaction for us; and that we cannot receive any thing at all as a free gift or act of grace from God.' p. 152. Or, as he expresseth it, p. 151, 'It robs God of the glory of his pardoning mercy, and gives all the honor of it to Christ the surety.' For Christ did not die for us, to 'dispose God to be merciful to us,' as he is pleased to represent the sentiments of those that are advocates for Christ's satisfac-

tion; but it was because he was disposed and determined to show mercy towards us, and that in such a way as should best comport with the dignity of his government, and his illustrious and moral excellencies, that he sent his Son to suffer and die for our redemption. So that this is so far from showing, as he would have it, that 'God has no such essential attribute as mercy, or any disposition to pardon or forgiveness in his own nature, p. 150, that the whole design had its rise in his rich grace and mercy, and the most free and boundless benevolence of his own nature, and is only a contrivance of wisdom how to exercise his mercy towards sinners, in a way most becoming his own glorious perfections, and the character he bears as the great Governor of the world. In this scheme therefore, though we are under very great obligations to the Son, all is ultimately referred to the glory of the Father; and by his grace we are saved. All blessings come to us from the Father, as the Fountain and prime glorious Author of them, through the Son, as the great medium of communication. They come as really from the Father, and are as truly his gifts, as if there were no regard had in the conferring them to the Mediator at all. The giving them to us through Jesus Christ, and with a regard to his sufferings and meditation on our behalf, relates only to the fittest manner of conveyance, or that way of distributing those gifts, which seems most fit to the supreme wisdom.

Another objection upon which he seems to lay a great stress is this, that Christ's satisfaction is perfectly needless, because repentance and new obedience will do as well without it. 'That God will pardon sin upon repentance and reformation, and will never reject or cast off a penitent returning sinner, is the eternal immutable voice of God in nature and reason, as well as Scripture; and therefore the case must be the same, whether Christ had suffered and died, or not. So that there is no room for the common Jewish hypothesis of satisfaction, nor can this alter the case, whether it be supposed or not,' pp. 148, 150.

But this which he here lays down as a truth of immutable and eternal certainty, that God is obliged in all cases and at all times to pardon and restore his offending creatures as often as they sincerely repent, and to accept this alone as a sufficient reparation, if understood absolutely, and without any limitation, is a most absurd principle, and would entirely vacate the authority of the divine government and laws. I shall not repeat what I have elsewhere offered concerning this matter.* But I believe every man that attentively considers it, will find himself obliged to acknowledge that the principle which the author here pretends to establish must necessarily be understood with limitations: and he himself afterwards limits it within very narrow bounds, as I shall have occasion to show. How far repentance shall be accepted and rewarded, and how far God will extend his mercy even towards

* See 'Answer to Christianity as Old as the Creation,' vol. 1. chap. vi.

penitent sinners, dependeth wholly on his governing wisdom and justice, and what he seeth to be necessary for the preservation of the sacred rights of his government, and the good order of the whole. When therefore this author so confidently asserteth, that the case must have been the same with regard to God's accepting and rewarding penitent returning sinners, whether Christ had died or not, he boldly pronounceth in the dark concerning a thing which it is impossible for him to be sure of; since he cannot pretend certainly to know what the divine government requireth, and what is necessary for answering the great ends of it, and for securing and vindicating his sacred authority. Besides, when he representeth it as a certain truth founded in nature and reason, that God will reward those that repent and obey him, I would desire to know whether he thinks God is obliged, in the nature and reason of things, to reward an imperfect obedience, mixed with many defects, and falling short, in many instances, of what the divine law requireth (and such is all our obedience in this present state) with eternal life, that is, with as glorious a reward as we could possibly have hoped for if our obedience had been absolutely sinless and without defect, yea and far transcending what in that case we could have pretended to have deserved from God? Upon what principle will he pretend to found this? Surely it must be acknowledged, that it dependeth wholly on God's own most free and unmerited grace and goodness, and on his supreme wisdom, how far he will reward the imperfect obedience of such sinful creatures, and what kind of reward he will confer, and in what way and method he will dispense it, as the fittest and most suitable to his governing wisdom and righteousness. And consequently no man can, without the highest arrogancy, take upon him to say, that the death of Christ doth not at all alter the case, and that God might as consistently with the great ends of his government have conferred pardon and eternal life upon sinners without it as with it. On the contrary, we may affirm upon sure grounds, that God would not have sent his own Son to undergo such grievous sufferings for our sakes, if our pardon and salvation might as well have been obtained without it.

With regard to what he saith concerning the impossibility of 'communicating personal merit and demerit from one person to another,' (which is another argument he makes use of against Christ's satisfaction) and that therefore 'it must be an eternal contradiction in the nature and reason of things to suppose or say that Christ was ever punished for our sins, or that we are rewarded for his righteousness,' pp. 155, 224. It will be easily admitted, that the individual personal crimes or good actions of one man cannot become the individual personal crimes or good actions of another, so that that other should be accounted to be the very individual person that performed that action or committed that crime. But, notwithstanding this, cases may happen in which one man may justly suffer for the crimes committed by another, if he voluntarily undertakes to suffer instead of the other, and the governing power

in the community seem fit to accept of that substitution.* And on the other hand, if one man should do a glorious action with a view that the benefit of it should redound to others, and if we should suppose the governing power to promise and agree, that in case of his undertaking and performing such a difficult service, it shall have such or such effects for the advantage of others; then there is nothing absurd in supposing, that in consequence of this, others may reap the advantage of it, according to the terms and conditions agreed on. Nor is there any thing in all this that can be proved to be contrary to the law of nature or reason. Now to apply this. It is not pretended that Christ's personal obedience and sufferings really became our personal obedience and sufferings; or that God doth esteem us personally to have endured those individual sufferings, and to have performed that individual obedience which Christ himself suffered and performed; for that were to esteem us to be one and the same individual person with Christ himself, or esteem them to be other than they really are. For since what Christ did and suffered was offered and done according to the Father's wise and gracious will and appointment for our sakes and upon our account, to obtain pardon and eternal life for all those that should comply with the terms fixed in the new covenant: it is highly congruous, that the benefit of Christ's obedience and sufferings should be applied to those for whose benefit it was designed; and that in conferring pardon and eternal life upon us, God should have a regard to what his Son by his own appointment did and suffered on our behalf, as a reason to his infinite wisdom and righteousness for conferring that pardon and salvation upon us, in that way and upon those terms which he hath appointed. When therefore this writer declares, that he is 'satisfied there is a day coming, in which no plea from the merits or righteousness of Christ will be of any avail;' and that he is 'as sure of this as he is that God ever made himself known to mankind, either by the Christian revelation or any other way,' p. 170. If he means, that this should not be allowed as a plea for those that obstinately persist in impenitency, and a course of presumptuous disobedience to his authority and laws, or as excusing men from personal obedience, it is very true: but if he means, that no regard shall be had to what Christ did and suffered on our behalf, as a reason why the sins of the truly penitent shall be forgiven them, and not urged against them to their condemnation at the great day; and why the obedience of the truly upright and sincere, though imperfect and mixed with many failures and defects, shall be crowned with so glorious and transcendent a reward, this is not true. Nor can he bring any good argument to show the absurdity of such a scheme, or that there is any thing in it contrary to justice or wisdom.

The strength of what he hath thought fit to urge against this

* That for this we have the consent of nations, see 'Grotius de Satisfac. Christi,' cap. 4.

dependeth wholly upon the wrong representation he is pleased to make of this matter. He represents the advocates for Christ's satisfaction as 'pleading the merit of his death in exemption from the obedience which God requires of us,' (p. 178), and as supposing that God will reward or punish men in the day of judgment, not according to their own personal actions, but 'for the actions of others, without any regard to the natural individuality or moral characters of the persons thus rewarded or punished,' pp. 155, 198. And on this foundation he objecteth against the doctrine of Christ's satisfaction, as inconsistent with the great principle of God's judging all men at the last day according to their works; which principle he makes to be the 'certain and infallible criterion between true and false religion.' But the necessity of personal repentance and new obedience is as strongly supported upon the scheme of those that assert Christ's satisfaction as it can possibly be upon any other. Because the benefit of Christ's satisfaction doth only extend to those who comply with the terms fixed in the new covenant: and it is evident from the whole gospel, that personal repentance and new obedience is there indispensably required of all that would be partakers of that great salvation which God offereth to us through his Son. It is as true on this scheme, as it is on the author's own, that 'personal righteousness, or a personal compliance with the terms of acceptance, is absolutely and indispensably necessary.' And it will be easily acknowledged, that 'no redundancy of merit, or any personal imputed righteousness of another, can be ever taken in account as an equivalent for this,' as he expresseth it, p. 169, if by this be meant, that it will not be taken instead of our own personal obedience, so as to render that unnecessary. Yea, it may be justly affirmed, that there is less hope of pardon and indulgence for those who do not now comply with the terms of divine mercy, by repenting and forsaking their evil ways, upon the scheme of those who maintain the gospel doctrine of Christ's satisfaction, than there is or can be upon the scheme which this writer seems here to advance. For since God is so just and holy, and hath such an inviolable regard to the authority of his government and laws that he would not pardon our sins, and give us eternal life, even upon our repentance, and sincere though imperfect obedience, without at the same time making such an effectual provision for securing the authority of his government by the sufferings of his own Son in our nature and stead; then it is evident, that those cannot hope to escape, who by their impenitency and disobedience reject this remedy which he hath in his infinite wisdom and goodness provided for them; and that they, who now refuse to comply with the terms on which alone pardon and salvation is offered through his Son, can have no ground to expect any further offer of mercy in any future time or state of things. Than which nothing can possibly be a stronger argument to show the absolute necessity of a present compliance with the gospel terms, that is, to engage us to present repentance and new obedience. Whereas, if repentance and reformation alone be supposed at all times a sufficient

satisfaction without any other provision for securing the majesty of the divine government, and the authority of his laws; then, though persons should reject the terms on which mercy is now offered during this state of trial, yet they might hope, that if at any time during the course of their existence even after this life is at an end, they should repent and be reformed, God would pardon and save them: and that the way would always be open for their being received into favour, as often as ever they should repent and be reformed, not only in this life, but to all eternity: and whether this, if it were really believed, would not be a great encouragement to defer their repentance and reformation, and to indulge themselves in a present gratification of their corrupt appetites, may be left to the consideration of any impartial thinking person. That which the author declares concerning the doctrine which he hath advanced, may, with much greater propriety, be applied to the Scripture doctrine of Christ's satisfaction, that 'it is the doctrine that must support the authority of God, and keep up the awe and influence of his governing justice and moral perfections in the world,' p. 199. At the same time that the most glorious favours and benefits are conferred upon sinful creatures, on condition of their returning to God by repentance, and a sincere though imperfect obedience, care is taken to guard and temper this marvellous grace, so as not to give them any temptation either to think lightly of the evil of those sins which are so fully pardoned, or to entertain too high thoughts of the merit of their obedience, which is so gloriously rewarded.

Another attempt this writer makes against the satisfaction of Christ is this, that the 'redundancy of Christ's merit could not be placed to our account, because all that was done and suffered by him was necessary to himself, and on his own account. As he was under a law to God, and acted with the prospect of a glorious eternal reward, he could not have failed in any part of his obedience without losing that reward, and forfeiting the divine favour. He finished the work that was given him to do, but then he did no more than he was bound to do, and nothing less could have been accepted from him. And though his obedience was free, it was a necessary obligation laid upon him by the will and law of God; from which he would gladly have been excused if his heavenly Father had thought fit. His praying earnestly not to be put upon such a trial shows that he had no such notion of the necessity of his death as a propitiation and atonement for the sins of the world. He would not have spent a whole night in such passionate prayers to God in order to prevent a thing which he certainly knew must happen, and which had been previously agreed on between the Father and him,' see pp. 154, 155.

It will be easily owned that Christ having once freely undertaken the work of our redemption, was under an obligation to finish it. But then it must be considered that his assuming our nature, and being brought under this obligation to suffer and die for us, was not merely by an act of God's absolute authority, but by his

own free consent and voluntary susception. And his undertaking this is still represented as the most astonishing proof of his wonderful love to mankind, a love beyond all comprehension, and beyond all parallel. And though it pleased God highly to reward him in his human nature for his humiliation and sufferings, the prospect of which helped to support him under those sufferings, yet nothing can be more evident than it is from the whole New Testament, that the proper design of his coming into the world was not to procure glory to himself; for this he had 'with the Father before the world was;' but to 'seek and to save that which was lost. What he did and suffered was truly and properly on our account, to open a way for our being pardoned and raised to the highest felicity according to the glorious designs of infinite wisdom and goodness. The law he was under as Mediator, by his own consent and the Father's appointment, obliged him to make 'his soul an offering for sin,' to suffer and die for our offences, and thereby to 'make reconciliation for iniquity,' and to 'give his life a ransom for many.' And it is very odd to argue, that because he was under this law, therefore what he did and suffered could not be accepted on our account, when by the essential tenor of this law what he did and suffered was done upon our account, and was to be accepted on our behalf.

And whereas this writer argues, that Christ would not have prayed to the Father that the bitter cup might pass from him, if he had had any 'notion of his death as a propitiation for the sins of the world,' or if he had 'certainly known that his death was a thing that must happen, and which had been previously agreed on between the Father and him:' it is manifest that this prayer could not be intended as he represents it. Since it plainly appeareth, from many express passages in the gospel, that our Lord very well knew that he must certainly suffer and die; and that this was the work which the 'Father had given him to do,' and which he himself had freely undertaken. As he declareth in general, that he came into the world 'to do the will' of his heavenly Father that 'sent him;' so also that one great end for which he was sent was that he might 'give his life a ransom for many,' Matt. xx. 28, and might 'give his flesh for the life of the world,' John vi. 51. He expressly saith, 'as the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father:' i. e. the Father knoweth my intentions and dispositions, and I am perfectly acquainted with the Father's most wise and gracious counsels and designs: 'and I lay down my life for the sheep. Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself; I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father,' John x. 15, 17, 18. A most remarkable passage, from which it appeareth, that the laying down his life for the salvation of mankind was a thing, in which the Father's appointment and his own most free and voluntary consent perfectly concurred. It was not a mere constraint laid upon him by God's absolute authority; his life was not taken

from him, whether he would or not; but he laid it down of himself; it was his own act and choice, and therefore the Father loved him. Here therefore we have the substance of what divines commonly call the covenant of redemption, and which our author has thought fit to ridicule, pp. 222, 223. For our Saviour here plainly representeth his laying down his life for the sheep as a thing agreed upon between the Father and him; and that the design of all was for our sakes, to procure the salvation of sinners. Accordingly, he frequently and expressly told his disciples what manner of death he was to die, what kind of sufferings he was to endure, and the principal circumstances of those sufferings; and this he foretold as a thing which he knew would most certainly come to pass.* And when Peter, upon hearing him declare that he was to suffer and die, took on him to say, 'Far be it from thee, Lord, this shall not be unto thee;' he gave him the severest rebuke that ever he gave to any of his disciples, 'Get thee behind me, Satan, thou art an offence unto me, for thou savourest not the things which be of God, but those that be of men,' Matt. xvi. 21—23. From whence it appears what a strong sense he had of the certainty of his sufferings and death, and the importance and necessity of those sufferings for answering very valuable ends and purposes. To which it may be added, that that very night in which he was betrayed, he instituted an ordinance to be observed in his church for a perpetual memorial of his body broken and blood shed for the remission of sins; where he represented it as a thing which was no less certain than if it had been actually accomplished. It is evident therefore that the design of those prayers which he offered up to the Father immediately after this, could not be with any view or expectation that his sufferings and death should be prevented, since he perfectly knew that he must suffer and die; that it was the Father's will that he should do so; and that this was one important part of the work which was given him to do, and which he himself had freely undertaken. But either the design of his prayer was that he might be delivered from those tremendous sorrows and agonies of soul which he then laboured under, and which were beyond all expression grievous, as appears from the accounts the evangelists give us of them; and this was not a declining the work that was given him to do for our salvation; since the extremity of those sorrows might be allayed or dispensed with, though his dying for our sins could not: or if the bitter cup mentioned by our Saviour in his prayer related to the whole of his suffering and dying, then the design of his prayer taken together is evidently this; to signify that his sufferings and sorrows were so inexpressibly grievous and dreadful that if it were possible he could have wished to be delivered from them; but that as he knew it was the Father's will for very wise and valuable ends, he submitted and resigned himself to undergo them, however grievous and shocking they might be, in themselves considered. To the same purpose is the prayer he had uttered not

* See Matt. xvi. 21. xx. 17, 18, 19. Mark ix. 31. x. 33, 34. Luke xviii. 31, 32, 33.

long before on the prospect of his sufferings, John xii. 27, 28, 'Now is my soul troubled, and what shall I say? Father save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour: Father, glorify thy name,' i. e. I foresee my sufferings will be so great and grievous, that the prospect of them fills my soul with trouble and amazement, so that I could wish if possible to be delivered from that hour of suffering and sorrow which I see approaching: but as I know that for this end I came into the world, and that this is thy will, and what thou hast appointed for wise and gracious ends; it is my desire and will that thou shouldst glorify thy name, and fulfil the designs of thy wisdom and goodness, though by my most grievous sufferings.

Whereas therefore this writer tells us, that Christ 'would gladly have been excused' from this trial, 'if his heavenly Father had thought fit;' it is very true, that he would have been willing to have been freed from those sufferings, if it had been consistent with the great designs of the divine wisdom and goodness; for he did not choose sufferings in themselves and for their own sakes: but taking in the whole, that it was the Father's will, and that such great and valuable ends were to be answered by it, he was willing and did undertake it. So that it is not true, that he 'declined a few hours' bodily sufferings,' as he represents it. For he did not decline his sufferings upon the whole, and taking in all considerations: he only poured forth his sorrows before his heavenly Father, and at the same time that he expressed his natural aversion and horrors of those sufferings absolutely and in themselves considered, he declared his resolution to undergo them as the case was circumstanced. And this prayer of his is highly useful for our sakes, to give us a more lively sense of the exceeding greatness of his sufferings and sorrows; and of the great importance and necessity of them, that they were such as could not be dispensed with; and to set us a pattern of the most entire resignation to God in the most difficult and trying circumstances. And I think this is evident from the whole account that is given us of our Saviour's last agonies and sorrows, that there was more in them than the mere dread and apprehension of temporal death, and the sufferings he endured from the hands of men. It was not the mere prospect of a 'few hours' bodily pain in a way that so many thousands had suffered before him, as this writer expresseth it, that filled his soul with such agonies and conflict. Since many of the martyrs, vastly inferior to him in a true firmness and constancy of mind, have been enabled to bear temporal death, and the severest bodily suffering, not only with patience, but with joy and exultation of mind. It is evident there was something in his sufferings and sorrows that lay much deeper, and which far transcended the greatest sufferings of the persecuted saints and martyrs; something that we are not able distinctly to describe and to explain; but which should fill us with awful thoughts of the majesty, greatness, and purity of God, and

of his abhorrence against sin, when we consider that all these his sufferings, so grievous and inexpressible, were for our sins.

There is one objection more which our author frequently insists upon with a peculiar air of triumph, as a perfect demonstration that there can be no foundation for the doctrine of Christ's satisfaction in Scripture; and that is, that there 'was no such thing as vicarious sacrifices under the law of Moses, and therefore there could be no reference to any such sacrifices in the New Testament when speaking of the death of Christ; and this he proves, because under that law 'no other penalty of what nature or kind soever was ever taken off or mitigated on the account of sacrifice. But this hath been shown to be a great mistake: see above chap. vi. to which I refer the reader; where he will find all that the author offers with a view to prove there could be no expiatory sacrifice under the law of Moses, considered. I shall only here farther observe, that whereas he wonders at Grotius and the systematical divines, for supposing that 'ever the life of a beast under the law was taken and accepted of instead of the life of the offender;' and declares, that if 'they can give him any such instance, he will be bound under a penalty never to speak a word more,' pp. 126, 127. If he understands by it, that they must give him an instance, where a person that had been guilty of a crime against which the law had expressly denounced the civil penalty of death, was by law to be freed from that penalty upon offering a sacrifice: this is, what none of those systematical divines over whom he so unmercifully triumphs were ever so absurd as to suppose: for they all know that in such cases there were no sacrifices appointed or admitted by law at all. But then this is so far from proving, as this writer intends it, that there were no vicarious sacrifices under the law, that it rather proves the contrary. For the reason why no sacrifices were appointed in those cases was, because sacrifices were understood to free a man from the penalty he had incurred by his crime. And therefore when it was designed that the offender in person must die, and when it was judged necessary for the good of the community that it should be so, no sacrifices were appointed, because he must shed his own blood, and therefore no blood of the beast was to be shed to make atonement for him. If sacrifices had been admitted in such cases, and yet the punishment had been inflicted on the criminal, it might have been argued that those sacrifices were of no avail to avert the threatened penalty. But it is a general rule, that in all cases where it was judged necessary that the offender himself should suffer in his own person, whether it were the punishment of death, or any other penalty, there was no sacrifice to be offered, or blood of atonement to be shed for him at all: and on the other hand, in all cases where the blood or life of the beast was to be offered for the man to make atonement for him, the law never appointed death or any other penalty whatsoever to be actually inflicted on him; which shows that sacrifices were supposed to avert the penalty from the person on whose account they were offered.

In cases where sacrifices were prescribed to be offered for sin, the man that came to offer the sacrifice was to 'lay his hand' upon the head of the victim, and to 'confess his sin,' and 'trespass which he had committed,' Lev. v. 5, and if he had wronged his neighbour, was to make restitution; and then the animal was to be slain, and his blood shed and sprinkled upon the altar, and thereby offered to the divine majesty: and hereupon the offender was, in the eye of the law, freed from the guilt he had contracted. The curse he had incurred in strict justice was supposed to be averted by the blood of the sacrifice shed for atonement. For it is declared, that it is 'the blood that maketh atonement for the soul:' and the reason is given, 'because the life of the flesh is in the blood,' Lev. xvii. 11. From whence it is plain, that the atonement lay in this, that the blood or life of the animal was given or offered for the offender, to free him from the guilt he had contracted, and the curse and punishment he had incurred by his sin. And accordingly this writer himself tells us, that the Jews had a 'very high opinion of their legal sacrifices and atonements by blood:' and that it was 'an established principle with the whole Jewish nation, that without shedding of blood there could be no remission:' and that they thought that 'God himself could be no otherwise satisfied and atoned but with blood.' And therefore he would have it that St. Paul was obliged to talk of the blood and death of Christ as an expiatory sacrifice in compliance with their prejudices; but that the metaphor, as he uses it, 'ought not to be strained to the rigid, literal and most absurd sense of the Jewish law,' pp. 163—165. Where he manifestly supposeth, that the Jews did acknowledge a vicarious sacrifice in that sense in which it is to be understood in this question, and that this was agreeable to the 'literal sense' of their own law. And hence he frequently calleth the assertors of Christ's satisfaction 'Judaizers,' and the doctrine itself the 'Jewish doctrine of propitiation and atonement.' And yet this same very consistent writer hath the confidence to assert over and over again, that there 'was no such thing as a vicarious sacrifice under the law;' and that 'therefore the apostle Paul could not refer to any such practice, or suppose the death of Christ analogous to a thing that never existed, not so much as in supposition. And therefore the Christian priests who have introduced this notion of a vicarious penal sacrifice, have run into grosser absurdities and more dangerous errors concerning it, than ever the Jewish or Pagan priests had done,' p. 210. But that the notion of vicarious sacrifices was not first introduced by the Christian priests, but had obtained long before both among Jews and pagans, may be proved with the clearest evidence.* And it is also undeniably evident that Christ's sufferings and death all along in the New Testament are represented under the notion of an 'expiatory sacrifice;' and that the sacrifices that were offered under the law are there represented as the types and figures of that most per-

* For this see among others Dr. Outram de sacrif. lib. 1. cap. xxii. see also cap. xx. pp. 228, 229.

fect oblation which Christ hath offered, and of the true atonement for the sins of mankind made by his suffering and dying for us.

The way our author taketh to account for Christ's sufferings and death being called a propitiation and sacrifice is pretty extraordinary. He makes a propitiation, or sacrifice in general, to be something offered to God by a voluntary act of obedience to him, upon which God becomes propitious to the person who yields and performs that obedience. And therefore Christ's propitiation according to him was nothing but the obedience offered to God upon which God became propitious to him, and highly rewarded him, as he will also be propitious to us upon our obedience. And he saith, that 'Christ by his death and shedding his own blood made a public declaration or authentic notification from God of the propitiatory reconciling virtue or acceptableness of such personal obedience,' p. 225. But at this rate Christ could not be said to offer a propitiation for us at all, but only for himself, and every man as well as he might be said to offer a propitiation for himself by his own obedience. And how this will agree with the Scripture expressions, and the account there given us, may be left to any man of common understanding that can read the New Testament. Besides, I do not see how upon this scheme he can be said to be a 'propitiation for sins' at all, much less for 'the sins of the whole world:' since he had no sins of his own to atone for, and according to this writer made no atonement for ours. Nor can I see with what sense it can be said, that 'Christ by his death, and shedding his own blood, made an authentic notification from God of the propitiatory virtue and acceptableness of his obedience;' since it was not his suffering and dying that properly notified to the world the acceptableness of his obedience, and that God was well pleased with him and his obedience, but his resurrection and consequent glorification. And therefore it was this, and not his sufferings and death, that according to our author's account of it, should have been called a propitiation, which he makes to be only declarative of the virtue and acceptableness of his obedience. But I shall not spend any more time in considering the account he pretends to give of this matter which hath nothing to support it but his own imagination. But this I am confident of, that if there had been nothing more in our Saviour's sufferings and death than this writer would have to be understood and intended by it, the New Testament writers would never have spoken of it, and represented it in the manner they have done, and in phrases which according to the usage of them that then obtained through all the world both among Jews and Gentiles, must almost unavoidably lead them to quite different notions, and to look upon it as making a true expiation for the sins of the world.

This book is already swelled so much beyond my original intention, that I must be very brief in my reflections on the account he pretends to give of some other doctrines of Christianity. Thus under pretence of rectifying the mistakes that have prevailed among 'Christian divines for 1400 years past to the unspeakable detriment of the Christian world, and of mankind in general,' with regard to the 'Christian doctrine of pardon upon repentance,' he makes a

very extraordinary attempt to prove, that not one wilful sin under the gospel shall be pardoned even though a man doth sincerely repent of it and forsake it. And that the general offer of pardon upon repentance made in the gospel, extended only to the sins committed by Jews or heathens before their embracing the faith of Christ, but did not extend to any one wilful presumptuous sin 'committed under the gospel dispensation itself, after men had engaged themselves in the Christian Covenant,' see from p. 170 to p. 177, this is to make the grace of the gospel much narrower than it was under the Old Testament dispensation. For in the law of Moses there was pardon not only for sins of ignorance, but even for wilful, deliberate sins which were afterwards sincerely repented of, and which the offender himself had voluntarily confessed; such are the instances mentioned, Lev. vi. 2, 3. And it is evident that the prophets every where abound with promises of pardon and mercy even to the greatest sinners upon their repentance and reformation. And can it be supposed that the gospel dispensation, which makes the most glorious discoveries of the divine grace and goodness, was designed to confine the mercy of God towards penitent returning sinners in narrower limits than it had been before, as it must have been if the representation our author gives of it be true? He pretends to prove this by three texts; two of which, viz. Heb. vi. 4—6, and Heb. x. 26, 27, are evidently to be understood not of any one single wilful sin which a man might happen to commit, and of which he afterwards sincerely repented, but of a total apostasy from the Christian faith and practice, as will appear to any one that impartially considers those passages; and the reader that would see this clearly proved, may consult Dr. Whitby. With respect to one of these passages, viz. Heb. vi. 4—6, the author is guilty of a signal falsification of the text. For he represents it as if it had been said, that it is quite impossible to renew the persons there mentioned 'by repentance;' and puts these words in large characters to distinguish them; the sense of which he makes to be this, 'That it is impossible to restore them to pardon, though they should repent.' Whereas, the original has it as it is justly rendered in our translation, that it is impossible to renew them 'unto repentance,' viz. because they had sinned against the best and most effectual means that could be made use of to convince and to convert them. And the simile by which he illustrates it necessarily requires this sense. For he compares their case to that of 'barren ground, which though it hath had rain coming upon it, and hath been often dressed and cultivated, bringeth forth nothing but briars and thorns, and is therefore 'rejected and nigh unto cursing.' Where his meaning cannot be, that if that land after long continuing barren, should at length bring forth fruit and grain, it must notwithstanding this be rejected; but that there was no hope of its ever becoming fruitful after all the cultivation that had been laid upon it had proved ineffectual, and therefore it was rejected and accursed. The last passage he produceth is from John v. 16—18, concerning 'the sin unto death,' which he pretends cannot be under-

stood of a total apostacy from the faith of Christ, or of the sin against the Holy Ghost, because it is said to be the sin of a 'brother or fellow-professor of Christ, which an apostate could not be.' But without entering into a particular explication of that passage, which would lead me too far, I shall only observe that the author's observation upon it will not hold good. Though 'the sin unto death,' is not there 'expressly said to be the sin of a brother,' as this writer affirms: or if the apostle had expressed it thus, 'if a brother sin a sin unto death,' &c., it would not have followed that this sin unto death could not be understood of an apostacy from the gospel. For it would be sufficient to justify such a manner of expression, if the person guilty of that sin was one that had before professed himself a brother or a Christian. Nor can I see any absurdity in such a phrase as this; if a Christian should totally apostatize from the faith and practice of the gospel, he cannot expect divine pardon and mercy. And of some such persons the apostle John seems to speak in several passages of this epistle. But whatever be the precise meaning of this passage, into which I shall not now particularly inquire, it cannot admit of the interpretation he gives of it. He is pleased to talk of the 'unnatural, forced, and constrained constructions that divines put upon these words,' but I know of no construction so absurd and unnatural as his own. Which is, that this sin unto death must signify any 'wilful presumptuous sin under the gospel in violation of a man's covenant engagements to the Christian faith and practice:' that every such sin is the sin unto death which is not to be prayed for, and which according to this author cannot be forgiven even upon repentance and reformation. Whereas it is evident from the whole gospel that that cannot be called a 'sin unto death,' which is sincerely repented of. 'Repentance and remission of sins,' are there always joined together, as having an inseparable connexion: and in this very epistle St. John saith, that 'the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sins,' that is from all sin truly repented of, 1 John i. 7, for so he explains himself, ver. 9, 'If we confess our sins' where confession is put for the whole of true repentance, of which it is a part, 'he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.'

The reasons this writer pretends to give to show the absurdity of supposing that wilful presumptuous sins are pardonable upon repentance, proceed entirely upon a wrong representation of the doctrine of repentance. If repentance were supposed to be no more than a man's expressing his sorrow for his sins at the same time that he persists in the practice of those wilful presumptuous sins which he pretends to confess and bewail, or a crying to God for mercy in his last hours, and feeling some bitterness and remorse from an apprehension of the wrath and misery which is ready to come upon him for his crimes; if this alone were judged to be sufficient to 'wipe off the guilty score,' I will allow that this would be a great encouragement to sin. But this is not that repentance to which pardon is promised in the gospel. Nor need we this author

to set us right in this matter, who talks as if he came to enlighten the world with some new discoveries on this subject, when the most judicious divines have all along asserted the utter insufficiency of such a repentance, and shown the extreme folly and danger of relying upon it. The repentance to which pardon and life is promised in the new covenant, includes such a real, effectual change, whereby a person becomes a 'new man' and a 'new creature;' that the vicious habits must be mortified, and the soul must be turned from the love of vice and sin, to a real, prevailing abhorrence of it, and to a love of God and universal goodness. And though a man may have been guilty of heinous, wilful sins in violation of his Christian covenant and vow, and may have long persisted in them, yet if afterwards he is brought to a true repentance for them, and not only with deep sorrow and humiliation applies to God through Jesus Christ for pardoning mercy, but becomes thoroughly changed and reformed, and is delivered from the power of his evil habits, and brought to a holy life and practice; it is very plain from the whole gospel that such a man is entitled according to the new covenant to pardon and forgiveness: his sins shall not be charged upon him to his condemnation, but he shall, through the rich grace and mercy of God in Jesus Christ, be made partaker of that great salvation which is promised in the gospel. And it is evidently of great advantage to the interest of true religion in the world, that there should be encouragement given to sinners during the continuance of this state of trial to repent and forsake their evil ways, and to apply themselves in good earnest to the practice of righteousness. But if a man, after having been once guilty of any wilful, presumptuous sin, e. g. of any one deliberate act of injustice, fraud, violence, uncleanness, &c., which are committed in violation of the gospel covenant, and against which, if persisted in, damnation is there denounced, could never hope to be forgiven, or restored to the divine favour, though he should never so sincerely repent and become entirely reformed, and show the most excellent dispositions: this doctrine, under pretence of standing up for the necessity of a holy life, would really be a prejudice to the cause of virtue; since it would entirely defeat the force of all exhortations to repentance, and would absolutely discourage all endeavours after reformation and amendments, and tend to harden men in sin and impenitency.

Here, by the way, we may observe the great consistency of this writer, who elsewhere represents it as 'the eternal, immutable voice of reason and nature as well as Scripture, that God will pardon sin upon repentance and reformation, and never reject and cast off a penitent returning sinner,' and that to deny this, would be to deny 'the mercy and goodness of God, and to leave no rational ground of hope or trust in him from any revelation whatsoever.' pp. 150, 212, and yet here represents the doctrine of pardon upon repentance, as a doctrine that gives the greatest encouragement to sin and wickedness; and denies that any wilful sins committed against covenant engagements can ever be remitted; and asserts that no 'grace or favour of the gospel, or benefit by Christ, can ever be pleaded for

any such sins,' even though they should be sincerely repented of, pp. 171, 172, &c. It is true, he pretends that it doth not follow from this, that 'repentance for such wilful, presumptuous sins would be of no avail, because repentance must always have this good effect, to lessen the number of men's sins, and increase the value of their good actions, in the day of account.' But how can this repentance for wilful sins lessen the number of men's sins in the day of account, if wilful sins are not pardonable upon repentance, as he expressly affirms? If such a repentance cannot procure the pardon of the sins that are repented of, how can it procure the pardon of other sins? According to the interpretation this writer pretends to give of the text produced by him, there could remain no hope of mercy for such persons though they should repent, but a 'certain fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation.' And then of what avail their repentance for such sins would be, or how it could 'increase the weight and value of their good actions,' is hard to see.

But I cannot help remarking on this occasion, that this author, who here pretends such a mighty concern for the interests of practical religion, and who seems so afraid of giving the least encouragement to sin and wickedness, that he denounces nothing but death and judgment even against all that have been guilty of any one wilful sin committed under the gospel, though they should afterwards be never so thoroughly reformed; this righteous author, who is here so zealous for strict rigid justice at the day of judgment, elsewhere thinks fit to make a mock of hell and damnation, and the perpetuity of the torments of the wicked, and represents it as the invention of the clergy, to keep up the awe of their own authority, see pp. 400, 401. He makes the eternal fire into which the wicked shall then be sent, and which is a strong expression designed to convey to us a more lively idea of the greatness of the punishment and misery prepared for them, to be nothing else but a consuming their bodies in the flames at the day of judgment: and the second death and everlasting destruction that shall befall them, to be only an utter abolishing of their being, body, and soul. So that their worm which dieth not, is a worm that shall soon die; and their fire which shall not be quenched, is a fire that shall soon be quenched, and that for ever. And all the expressions used in Scripture in various forms to signify the perpetuity of the punishment prepared for the wicked, signify no more than that the punishment which shall be denounced against them in the day of judgment, shall in that day be ended at once in the utter extinction of their being. And if this were to be all the punishment the most obstinate and hardened sinners were to expect, that they must first be condemned, and then immediately be consumed and annihilated at the great day, and so an utter immediate end be put to all their torments and miseries, I do not see any great matter of terror there would be in this to affright men from their evil courses; and am certain that if this were generally believed it would take off the greatest restraint on men's impetuous lusts and vices, and would let loose the

reins to all manner of wickedness, violence, and impurity. To which it may be added, that upon this scheme there is no room for supposing different torments to the wicked in proportion to the different aggravations of their crimes, since all are alike to be consumed and annihilated. I cannot but observe on this occasion that Celsus himself carries it much farther than this writer. For he saith that the Christians are right in this, that they believe that those that have lived well shall be happy, but the unjust or unrighteous shall be subject to eternal evils, *οἱ ἀνέκοι πάντων αἰώνίοις κακοῖς συνέξονται*. And he represents this as a doctrine in which all mankind are agreed, and from which nobody ought to depart. See Origen contra Cels. lib. 8. p. 409.

I shall take some notice before I conclude of the attempt our author makes against the positive precepts of Christianity. He sometimes pretends to prove that what are usually called the Christian sacraments, Baptism and the Lord's Supper, are not Christian institutions at all, nor designed for standing ordinances. And the argument he makes use of to this purpose is, that the external elementary parts of these sacraments were in use before as national rites, usages, or customs among the Jews, and that from thence it naturally follows, that they cannot, properly speaking, be Christian institutions. See p. 104, &c. 202, 203. But that which makes any thing to be properly a Christian institution, is its being instituted or appointed by Christ himself to be observed in his church; if therefore Baptism and the Lord's Supper were thus instituted or appointed by Christ himself, they are properly speaking Christian institutions. And it doth not alter the case whether we suppose them with regard to the outward elementary part of them to have been used among the Jews before or not. Thus, e. g. let us grant that baptism was a rite of long standing among the Jews in the initiation of proselytes before the time of our Saviour, though this author is in the wrong to affirm that no learned Christian ever denied it, for I could name him several learned Christians that have denied this. But I am willing to grant that it was used before the time of John the Baptist, and of our Saviour, in admitting proselytes of righteousness, who were obliged to observe the whole law (for as to the proselytes of the gate, they never were admitted by baptism,* though this writer positively affirms they were, p. 105.) But then it must be considered that baptism in this case was never used alone, but as joined with circumcision and the offering a sacrifice. If therefore Christ had used baptism, merely because it was a Jewish national rite or usage, as this writer pretends, why did he not use circumcision for the same reason in admitting proselytes, since this was accounted to be no less essential, yea and of greater importance, and no man could be a member of that church and polity without being circumcised? It was not therefore merely because it had been used before among the Jews, but because on other accounts it seemed fit to the divine wisdom, that this should be the standing

* See Selden de jure nat. & gent. lib. 2. cap. 3.

ordinance of initiation under the New Testament, as circumcision had been under the Old. And accordingly Baptism was applied by our Saviour to other and farther purposes than it had been among the Jews. And I suppose our author will scarce pretend that they were baptized before in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, or that they were baptized into the death of Christ.

With regard to the Lord's Supper he pretends that the Jews had a rite of usage like this at all their common meals; and I will grant that it is probable they usually had bread and wine at their meals: but what is this to the purpose? Will he say that they ever received bread and wine in the manner and for the purposes for which our Saviour appointed it at his last supper? Was bread and wine ever used before among the Jews in commemoration of the sufferings and death of Christ? And whereas he tells us, that this usage was pretty early brought into the churches, in their very large and populous assemblies, first at Corinth, and afterwards at other places, but this was done without any apostolical advice or authority, p. 107. Nothing is plainer, than that they received this ordinance at the same time that they received the knowledge of Christianity from the apostle Paul. From whose express words it is manifest that he delivered it to the Corinthians, as a thing that he had received by immediate revelation from Christ himself, and as a matter of importance to be observed in the Christian church till the coming of our Lord, and which required great care and reverence, and solemnity, in order to a right celebration of it.

The arguments he produceth against positive precepts in general are little more than a confident asserting the very thing that is in debate: As when he saith it is plain, and he may venture to take it as a postulatum, that all means of God's appointment must have a natural relation to, and connexion with the end, &c. or else we must suppose that God is an arbitrary Being. pp. 201, 413. For a thing which is in itself antecedently indifferent, may by divine appointment be appropriated to a sacred signification and use, which it would not have had without that designation and appointment; and then when it hath by God's institution such a signification annexed to it, may be highly useful to promote the main ends of religion. Any one that is acquainted with human nature cannot but know that the appointing outward signs and representations may in some cases impress a sense of a thing more strongly and affectingly upon the mind. Special commemorative signs and seasons set apart for that purpose, have often been judged, by the wisest nations, to be of great use for keeping up the remembrance of important events. And what arguments can be brought to prove either that God himself cannot in consistency with his wisdom and goodness appoint some things of this kind to be observed, or that if he did they would be of no use or advantage in religion at all?

To apply this. The death of Christ is represented in the sacred writings as an event of great importance, the belief and consideration of which is of the highest use in religion: and even this writer himself supposes the death of Christ to be improvable to many valuable

and excellent purposes, some of which he is pleased to mention, p. 166, 168, 177, &c. And if so, then certainly it must be of great use in practical religion frequently to commemorate the death of Christ. And the more solemn that remembrance is, the more likely it is to answer the end, and make proper impressions upon the mind. And consequently an ordinance, the express design of which is to oblige us to such a frequent and solemn remembrance of it, and to make it present to our minds by sensible signs and representations, must be highly useful for attaining and promoting the great end of all religion.

Our author makes the application and attention of the mind, and a man's taking himself off from such avocations to other business and pleasure that would hinder his main pursuit, to be the necessary means of obtaining the divine wisdom or true religion, p. 421. And if so, then it must be of great use to have solemn seasons of recollection, in which men look upon themselves as under an obligation by divine appointment to apply themselves more particularly to religious considerations, which otherwise in the hurry of worldly business or pleasures they would be apt to neglect. For this reason I have always thought the appointment of weekly sabbaths to be a wise constitution : and in this view the sacrament of the Lord's Supper may be also shown to be of great use ; since when rightly attended upon according to the original design, it hath a tendency to fix the attention of our minds on such considerations as must needs have a mighty influence to strengthen and improve our love to God, and charity towards mankind, and to inspire us with a deep sense of the evil and malignity of sin. To which it may be added, that it engageth us to frequent self-examination, 1 Cor. xi. 28, which hath a tendency to promote that self acquaintance, which by the author's acknowledgment is necessary to divine wisdom and true religion. And besides all this, it must needs be of great use as it engageth us frequently to recognize the obligations of the new covenant that was ratified by the blood of Christ, and to renew our solemn engagements to the practice of true religion and righteousness. When Pliny in his celebrated letter to Trajan represents the primitive Christians as solemnly binding themselves in their religious assemblies, not to commit immoralities, such as thefts, robberies, adulteries, falsehood, and betraying their trust ; *ne furta, ne latrocinia, ne adulteria committerent, ne fidem fallerent, ne depositum appellati abnegarent* ; was this a prejudice to their character ! Or can it be thought that their religion was the worse for having an ordinance in which they solemnly bound themselves by an obligation, accompanied with sacred external rites or signs, to the practice of all righteousness and virtue, and to avoid vice and wickedness ?

And now it will be easy to form a judgment concerning the justness of what our author advances when speaking of the distinction between the religion of the end, and the religion of the means, he saith, that the means in this case must be as necessary as the end, for otherwise they would be no means at all, in contradistinction to any thing else : And that unnecessary means are fit only for

an unnecessary religion, and they that will have the one ought to be content with the other, p. 420. When he talks of unnecessary means, the word unnecessary may admit of two significations. If by unnecessary means he intends things that are absolutely useless and insignificant, it will be easily acknowledged that such things are good for nothing, and of no advantage in religion; but such are not the Christian institutions, which rightly considered, and observed according to the original appointment, are of great and manifold use. But if by calling them unnecessary, he means that they are not as necessary as the end itself, and that it is possible the end may be obtained without them, then in this sense means may not be absolutely necessary, and yet may be of considerable use. And if they can be shown to be very useful in the original design and appointment, and that they were prescribed by the Author of our religion, that in the use of them the great ends of religion might be promoted; to discard or neglect them under pretence of their not being absolutely necessary would be a very wrong conduct, and would show both folly and disobedience. Our author is pleased often to talk of mechanical means of grace, mechanical agency of the Spirit, and the conveyance of grace, *ex opere operato*, and he represents those that think themselves obliged to attend upon those instituted means as expecting that they would operate physically upon them like medicines upon the blood and humours; but without having recourse to any such absurd suppositions, it may be justly said, that if divine assistances be necessary to our making a proficiency in the knowledge and practice of true religion, as this writer himself seemeth sometimes to grant, then, on supposition that God hath instituted ordinances to engage us to a solemn recollection and remembrance of such things as are of great importance in religion, and to be of use in strengthening, exciting, and enlarging good affections and dispositions in our souls, those that from a regard to his institutions and in obedience to his authority are careful in their attendance upon them, and endeavour to observe them in a proper manner according to the original appointment and design, may more justly expect the divine assistances and influences in the use of those means, than they that allow themselves in the habitual neglect, much more in the contempt of them.

There is one objection more which I shall here take some notice of, because the author makes a great flourish with it, to show that there is no certainty in revealed religion, and that is drawn from the differences there are among Christians, with relation to the articles of their faith. He sets out with great pomp in the beginning of his book with giving us a catalogue of doctrines of revealed religion in which Christians differ, and those the most learned, impartial, and diligent inquirers. From whence he argues that the Scriptures are uncertain and obscure, and that there can be no important or fundamental doctrines in revealed religion, and no determinate sense in which they are to be taken: that there are as many different schemes of revealed religion as there are men; and that it is not one religion, but a vast number of religions: and he thinks it is strange that

God should reveal a religion as of any necessity or use to mankind, which may be taken in as many different senses as there are different capacities, apprehensions, and ways of thinking among men. see pp. 15—19, 95, 96. and he returns to it again at the latter end of his book, pp. 443, 444.

But if there were any thing in this way of arguing, it might be equally turned against natural religion, and even against the common principles of sense and reason, to show that there is nothing to be depended upon either in religion or any thing else. For though this writer takes upon him to affirm that the religion of nature has been always the same, and must for ever be alike apprehended by the understandings of all mankind, as soon as it comes to be fairly proposed and considered, p. 94. yet nothing is more certain than that as large a catalogue might be easily produced of differences in doctrines relating to natural religion, as what he hath been pleased to give us with regard to the doctrines of revelation ; and that among persons that pretend to impartial inquiry, and some of whom have appeared to be persons of sobriety, benevolence, and all the social virtues, as he expresseth it. And yet it doth not follow either that there are no important and fundamental doctrines in natural religion, or that there is no determinate sense in which those doctrines are to be taken. Our author himself furnisheth us with some instances of this kind. He argueth at some length against some persons who, he tells us, look upon themselves to be great philosophers and very wise men ; and whom he himself acknowledgeth to be men of parts, and subtlety in speculation, who yet deny man's free agency, and introduce an universal fatalism and necessity in all actions. He also asserteth the obligation of the duty of prayer, which he seemeth to regard as an important duty of natural religion against some in this age who deny it. And he tells us, that many great and celebrated philosophers, persons that are above the gross ignorance of the common herd, have maintained, that the world is governed by certain inherent powers and properties communicated to it in the beginning, without the continual presence, influence, and operation of the first cause upon it. This he represents as a philosophical scheme of natural atheism, the parent of moral atheism, and argues strenuously against it : see from p. 179, to p. 197. These then by his own acknowledgment are instances of differences relating to matters of great importance in natural religion, and yet he will not allow that men's differing about them is any proof of their being uncertain and obscure or of no use ; for he expressly declares them to be matters of infinite consequence to mankind.

It is as true in points of natural religion as in revealed, that where men do profess to agree in the doctrines, they often differ in the manner of explaining them, and in some or other of the ideas they form concerning them.* From whence it would follow according to our

* There are perhaps hardly any two thinking men that exactly agree in all the ideas they form concerning the divine nature, attributes, and providence. But it would be foolish to pretend that they do not agree in believing and acknowledging the being, attributes, and providence of God, because they do not agree in all the ideas they form concerning them. And yet thus it is that this writer argues in order to magnify the

author's manner of arguing, that there are as many different schemes of natural religion as there are men; that there is no determinate sense in which its doctrines and principles are to be taken; and that there is no natural religion at all, because God would not give a religion as of any use to mankind that is capable of being taken in so many different senses. Though how this could be prevented except God should miraculously convey the same ideas to all men, and at once remove all their prejudices and prepossessions, and heal all their vices and wrong affections of mind, is hard to conceive. A noted sceptic Sextus Empiricus, makes use of this very argument of the author to show that there is no certainty to be depended upon with respect to the being of a God, a providence, and the moral differences of good and evil. See the third book of his hypotyposes.

But the truth is, the argument, whether with regard to natural or revealed religion, is weak and fallacious. It doth not follow that any thing is uncertain or obscure, or of no consequence, merely because persons pretending to learning and impartial inquiry differ about it. If a doctrine comes to me confirmed with good evidence and sufficient proof, I am not to think worse of it either with regard to its truth or importance, because another man that professeth to be an honest impartial inquirer denies or doubts of it. For the causes of men's different apprehensions lie very deep; and it is hard to know who is an impartial unprejudiced inquirer. This is a thing that we cannot properly judge of. There are often some unobserved prejudices, some secret wrong turns and affections of mind, which hinder those from a right discernment of truth in particular instances, that are otherwise sober, honest, and diligent. We must form our own judgments concerning any doctrine according to the evidence that ariseth to us upon the best inquiry we are able to make: and if it appeareth to be well founded in reason or revelation, this ought to be sufficient to satisfy our own minds, and to influence and regulate our own practice. And we may also, according to the sense we may have of its importance, use all proper endeavours in a fair way to convince and satisfy others too, and to oppose the contrary errors. At the same time we ought to exercise great charity towards those that have the appearance of serious inquirers, and who seem to have a real love of truth and goodness, however greatly we may think them to be mistaken. But there are some persons concerning whom it may be said, without any breach of charity, that their behaviour is such as plainly discovereth the bad temper of their minds, and that they are not in a proper disposition for seeking out truth. And I believe it would be difficult to find an author that hath taken less care to preserve the appearances of a candid, a serious, and unprejudiced inquiry, than this gentleman that is pleased to assume the character of the moral philosopher.

differences about the doctrines of revelation. But it doth not follow with regard to revealed any more than it doth with regard to natural religion, that no two thinking men agree in any of its doctrines or principles, because they may happen to form different ideas concerning something or other relating to those doctrines.

Towards the end of his book he breaks forth into a large encomium on moral philosophy or divine wisdom, and the proper means of attaining to it. His general design in this is obvious, which is to direct men to seek the knowledge of true religion by contemplating the heavens, the earth, themselves, and brute creatures, in opposition to their learning it from the Holy Scriptures. No man will deny that it is very useful, and a duty, to consider the discoveries that are made to us of the divine glory and perfections in the frame of nature, in the works of creation and providence, and in the constitution of our own bodies and minds. And a much greater progress hath been made in all these ways of obtaining knowledge by those that have the advantage of divine revelation, than was ever made by any that had no other way of instruction than what this writer proposeth. Revelation doth not at all hinder, but promotes such inquiries : it doth not discourage but assists and improves the exercise of cool impartial reason : and at the same time that it excites and engages us to make use of all the light of nature and reason, it opens and enlarges our views by giving us a more clear and certain discovery of several things which it is of importance for us to know, and which either we could not have known at all, or not with such satisfying clearness and certainty as we can do by that assistance. Our author talks in magnificent terms of a man's ' conversing with God, and deriving communications of light and knowledge from the eternal Father and Fountain of it, and hearing the clear and intelligible voice of his Maker and Former speaking to his silent, undisturbed, attentive reason.' But though a man that earnestly implores the assistance of the Father of Lights, and with a humble and teachable mind gladly makes use of the advantages of reason and revelation which God hath put into his hands, and is ready to practise as far as he knows, may upon good grounds hope for God's gracious guidance and assistance as far as is necessary to lead him to true happiness; yet if, besides the common light of nature and reason, God has been pleased to favor us with farther discoveries of great importance by a more extraordinary revelation, those, that under pretence of hearkening to their own reason obstinately reject this revelation, though confirmed with all the evidence that can reasonably be desired in such a case, and shut their eyes against the heavenly light, cannot justly expect God's gracious communications ; but rather have reason to be afraid that he will give them up to the hardness of their own hearts, and will call them to a severe account for their obstinate unbelief and disobedience hereafter. It is certain that the gospel pronounces a very severe sentence against those to whom it is made known, and who yet reject the evidence ; and warrants us to conclude, that their infidelity is owing to very criminal causes, and bad dispositions of mind ; and that their danger is very great, and their condemnation shall be aggravated. It highly concerns this author to consider this, who pretends to own the great usefulness of revelation in aid of human reason in the present corrupt state of human nature, and yet useth his utmost endeavour to expose it to the derision and contempt of mankind. I heartily wish him a better temper of

mind, and that he would seriously reflect, if it be not yet too late, on his great guilt and danger. I am sorry there is so much reason to fear that he is incorrigibly hardened in his infidelity. For he hath plainly enough let us know that if he had lived in the time of our Saviour and his apostles, and had been an eye-witness to all the glorious miracles that were then wrought, and all the extraordinary powers and gifts of the Holy Ghost, that gave such an illustrious attestation to the gospel revelation, this would have had no influence upon him, since he will not allow these to have been any proofs at all. On others I trust they will still have their designed effect.

I have fairly examined whatsoever he hath offered that hath any appearance of reason, and many things that are little better than downright misrepresentation and abuse. I am satisfied that if reason and argument be fairly attended to with that seriousness and impartiality that becometh the weight and importance of the subject, our holy religion hath nothing to fear from the attacks of its most subtle and malicious adversaries. God grant that those that profess to believe it may be careful to adorn their profession by all the fruits of piety, charity, purity, and the heavenly mind and life, which it is the manifest design and tendency of its excellent doctrines and precepts to promote.

PART II.

THE DIVINE AUTHORITY

OF THE

OLD AND NEW TESTAMENT ASSERTED,

WITH A FARTHER VINDICATION OF MOSES AND THE PROPHETS; OUR SAVIOUR, JESUS
CHRIST, AND HIS APOSTLES.

BEING A

DEFENCE OF THE FIRST PART

OF THIS WORK AGAINST THE EXCEPTIONS AND MISREPRESENTATIONS IN
THE SECOND VOLUME OF THE MORAL PHILOSOPHER.

BY JOHN LELAND, D.D.

1993

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P R E F A C E.

THE author of 'The Moral Philosopher,' who honours himself with the title of Philalethes, a lover of truth, has been pleased to publish another book, which he calls 'the second volume of the Moral Philosopher, or a Farther Vindication of Moral Truth and Reason.' And he solemnly declares as he had done before, that 'he had no other view or aim in writing his book, but to serve and promote the cause of truth, peace, and righteousness, and to separate the true religion from that of superstition, which has always proved the bane and destruction of it,' p. 10. It is well we have his own word for this, or else, from his manner of writing, no man would have suspected it to be so. If he really intended to be an advocate for truth and religion, he is certainly one of the most unhappy advocates that ever appeared, since the methods he makes use of are fit only to serve error and imposture; and are enough to disgrace the best cause in the world.

He had in his former book declared, that if any man made reprisals upon him in his controversy, he would cheerfully submit to the keenest revenges of truth and reason, and be always ready to own the great advantage and honour of being thus conquered: And that if in attempting to serve the cause of virtue and true religion he has missed his aim, he has put it in the power of his adversary, by setting him right, to lay him under the strongest obligations of gratitude and respect.* I endeavoured to answer his invitation, and by detecting his mistakes and misrepresentations, gave him an opportunity of rectifying them. But this, instead of engaging his acknowledgments, has only raised his indignation. And he seems resolved to let the world see what a dangerous thing it is to presume to contradict a writer of his importance. Though he appears to be mightily displeased with any that suppose the apostles or prophets to have been under an infallible guidance, he acts as if he thought he had the privilege of infallibility in his own person. I do not find that he has acknowledged or retracted any one mistake, throughout his whole book, though several of them are so gross that it is impossible to defend them. When he is most pressed, the way he takes to justify himself, is, to persist in what he had advanced, and assert it with greater confidence than before; at the same time assuring his reader, that I had not said one word to the purpose; and that all that was offered against him was mere impertinent declamation and harangue. And to this he usually adds a most fearful outcry against systems and school-divinity. When he has nothing else to say in answer to an argu-

* See Mor. Phil. vol. i. pref. p. 4.

ment, it is but calling it systematical, and this must pass for effectual confutation of it. And I believe the world will do him the justice to acquit him of the charge of being a systematical writer, since it does not appear either from his former book or from this, that he has any consistent scheme of principles at all.

The reader cannot but observe, that though this author allows himself an unbounded liberty with the characters of the most excellent persons, yet he shows an extreme sensibility with regard to his own. He sometimes complains heavily, as if I had used him very ill; though I know no instance in which I have done so, except by detecting his misrepresentations, laying open the injustice and falsehood of his aspersions, and showing the weakness of his reasonings. This I was obliged to do in my former book, and I have had farther occasion to do it in this. If this tends to expose him, (and who can answer such a writer without thus exposing him?) it is what he has drawn upon himself, and to himself alone he is obliged for it. But as to his invectives against me, and the little flirts of low buffoonery, which run through his whole performance, and which would have opened a large field for ridicule, if I had been disposed to take that advantage against him, the reader will find I have for the most part passed them by without taking the least notice of them. And, indeed, I think a man can scarce be reduced to more miserable circumstances, as a writer, than to be obliged to have recourse to such meannesses as these; and it is one of the most effectual methods he could have taken to expose himself and the cause he contends for.

I have taken no particular notice of his preface, which is only a heap of loose rambling reflections on *superstition*, the *clergy*, *supernatural doctrines*, the proof from *miracles*, placing religion upon *authority*, *spiritual scholasticism*, and *Biblical infallibility*. These things he frequently repeats in his book, where I have considered them as far as is necessary. Nor have I entered on a distinct examination of his long letter to Eusebius, which I doubt not that learned writer, to whom it is addressed, will call him to an account for, though there is very little in it but what he said before. I shall not detain the reader any longer here, but refer him for farther remarks on the author's management of his subject to the *introduction*; in which I have endeavoured to obviate some general charges he advances against me; and have laid together several things which lie scattered here and there throughout his book, and cannot well be reduced to any particular head of argument.

I shall only add, that I have endeavoured all along so to order my answer to him, that it may have something in it worth reading, and which may be of general use; which a bare defence of myself against his misrepresentations would hardly have been.

THE INTRODUCTION.

OUR author is pleased to begin his introduction with blaming me for having written 'a large book in defence of Christianity and revelation, without so much as letting people know what I mean by the words, what this revelation is, or what its peculiar doctrines and duties are.' This is an odd complaint from an author who himself talks in a perpetual confusion concerning Christianity, revelation, reason and moral truth, and fitness. He had in his former book asserted the great usefulness of revelation in aid of human reason in the present corrupt state of mankind. And he continues sometimes to express himself after the same manner. But it is no easy matter to know what he intends by that revelation, the usefulness of which he pretends to acknowledge. By 'divine revelation' he seems frequently to understand no more than the discovery of truth to the mind in whatsoever way it is made known, even though it be by a man's own study and application in the ordinary use of his natural faculties. He declares that reason itself is a 'natural revelation from God to man, and the revival or recovery of lost or neglected truth may be called a particular revelation, or extraordinary manifestation of divine truth, however a man received or came by it, whether by the strength and superiority of his own natural faculties, or by any more immediate supernatural illumination,' pp. 25, 26, see also pp. 12, 13, 44. But how to reconcile this sense of divine revelation with other passages in his book is hard to see. He represents Confucius, Zoroaster, Plato, Socrates, and the greatest moralists of the heathen world, as having been without 'the light of revelation;' and that hence it was, that their 'best systems of morality' were mixed with 'many gross absurdities.' And he represents the great disadvantage those nations labour under that 'never had the benefit of revelation;' among whom he reckons the Indians and Chinese; and that therefore none of them 'could ever draw up as good a system of natural religion as a Christian.' See *Mor. Phil.* vol. i. pp. 144, 145. But if by revelation he meant, according to the notion he now frequently gives us of it, any discovery or manifestation of moral truth, even when acquired by men's own study and application in the natural use of their faculties; or as he had expressed it in his former book, any 'rational, moral truth, that must appear as such to the mind or understanding of man, as soon as it comes to be fairly proposed under its proper evidence;' see vol. i. p. 343; I do not see how he can consistently say, that Socrates, Confucius, &c. and the greatest heathen moralists were without the

light of revelation, or that the Chinese, &c. never had the benefit of revelation. For will he say, that none of them had any discovery or manifestation of rational moral truth ever made to them in any way whatsoever, no, not so much as in the natural exercise of their own faculties? But it seems our moral philosopher has the privilege of varying the signification of words, just as it best suits his present convenience. And if his answerers happen to take them in one sense, he can easily produce some passages or other in his book to show that he takes them in another sense, and then insult them for not understanding him.

The reader might perhaps think there was reason to complain of such a conduct. But he very dexterously turns the charge upon his adversaries. He, it seems, needs not particularly explain what he means by revelation, though he takes the word in a very unusual and ambiguous sense; but they must explain what they mean by the revelation they contend for, though they take it in the common sense of the word, and in which it has been always taken in this controversy. He can call himself a Christian, and intend a quite different thing from what the rest of the world understand by it, and yet must be thought to speak clearly and intelligibly, without explaining himself more particularly; but he has a right to insist upon it, that his answerers should tell him what they mean by Christianity. And if, to satisfy him, I should tell him what he knew well enough before, that by Christianity I understand those doctrines and laws which were taught and delivered by Christ and his apostles, and which, there is good ground to believe, were originally given in a way of extraordinary communication from God himself; and that, therefore, I think myself obliged to regard them, not merely, as the product of human fallible wisdom and reason, or as the dictates of philosophers and moralists, but as the doctrines and laws of God, and to be received and submitted to as of divine authority. This will not content this writer, except I let him know what the several doctrines and duties of Christianity are. I must be obliged to give him a particular catalogue of all the articles of religion which I believe, and of all the duties which I look upon myself obliged to practise. And if I should do this, he might probably call it preaching, which, with him, is enough to discredit the best discourse in the world; or compare me, as he is sometimes pleased to do, to a child saying his catechism.

In the mean time, he is so kind as to tell the world, what is not that faith I contend for. It is not that 'grand essential article of all religious faith, that God is, and that he is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him. The filial love and fear of God, and the brotherly love of mankind, grounded upon the firm belief of all the divine perfections, and particularly a trust in God, as the rewarder of good, and punisher of bad men;' this, he says, is no part of that faith which I oppose to infidelity, nor has my anti-infidel faith any relation to it or connexion with it. This is very strange. That a man should believe the Scriptures to be a divine revelation, where all these things are most clearly and fully revealed, most strongly

established, and most pathetically enforced ; and yet this, his belief of the Scriptures, have no relation to or connexion with the belief or practice of those things which are there so expressly taught and enjoined. But our author presumes that a man may have this faith, and yet be, in my opinion, 'an infidel, an enemy to religion, and a wicked opposer of revelation,' p. 2. I must own, that it is my opinion, there are very few that really believe and practise according to the faith he here describes, taken in its just extent, that are enemies to the Scripture revelation. But it hath often been observed, that many of the enemies of revelation screen themselves under the pretence of standing up for natural religion, who, at the same time, when they have come to explain themselves, it hath appeared that they have been for subverting some of the main principles and obligations of it. And this writer must pardon me, if I cannot think him any great friend to the faith and practice which he here describes, who uses his utmost endeavor, and that with all the arts of misrepresentation and calumny, to expose the Scriptures to the ridicule and contempt of mankind. The effect of which would be mightily to weaken the force of those principles and duties among the people. One of those principles, as he himself here represents them, is, that 'God is the punisher of wicked men ; and yet, if we may judge from several passages, both in his former book and in this, if he came to explain himself, he would so manage the doctrine of future punishments, as to set wicked men, in a great measure, free from those terrors which the representation made of them in the gospel tends to inspire them with.

The general account of his faith he seems wonderfully to value himself upon ; for he repeats it in his preface, and in several parts of his book. But there is no mighty thing in this for any man to boast of, as if he was bringing some important discovery to mankind. It is the easiest thing in the world to talk in this general way, and is of little use and gives little direction either in doctrines or morals. Yet this loose and general account of religion is, I suppose, to serve instead of Scripture, and must be of greater use to instruct the people in religion and morals, and to engage them to the performance of their duty, than the excellent doctrines and precepts of holy writ, whereby we are particularly instructed what we are to believe, and what we are to practise, and have our duty enforced upon us with the most powerful and important motives.

He next goes on to inform the reader, what that faith is which I contend for, and which I would declare to be 'necessary and fundamental to Christianity, if I had but the courage and honesty to speak out,' and that is, a 'firm and indubitable persuasion that the whole Jewish and Christian history contained in the books of the Old and New Testament is infallible, and certainly true, especially that part of it which relates to prophecy, miracles, ghosts, apparitions, and other supernatural and superrational facts,' p. 2. I do not know what business he has here to bring in ghosts and apparitions, except that he thought it would make a ridiculous sound

in the ears of some persons. However, he lets us plainly know, that the Scripture miracles and prophecy have the same weight in his esteem as the stories of ghosts and apparitions, which I presume are of no great credit with him. But he adds, that 'since the historians in all this were immediately inspired, and so far under the direction of the Holy Ghost, that they could not err, to doubt, or to reject any part of it, would be to reject the whole, and overturn all revelation.' This, he says, he takes to be the faith which I oppose to infidelity, and that every man that does not believe all this, I account an infidel. Now to satisfy him that I am not quite so narrow as he takes me to be, I will tell him, that if any man should be of opinion that in some facts related in the Sacred Writings there are mistakes, whether owing to the negligence of transcribers, or even in some smaller instances to inadvertencies or forgetfulness of the original historians, or if he should doubt of some particular books belonging to the sacred canon, though I should think him mistaken, yet if at the same time he believed the fidelity of the sacred historians, and the truth and certainty of all the main facts whereby the Christian revelation was attested, and did accordingly receive the doctrines and laws there taught and enjoined as a revelation from God, and consequently as of divine authority; I would be far from branding him as an infidel or an enemy to Divine Revelation. But if a man should declare that we have no proof that the main facts whereby the Scripture was attested, were really done; or that if they were done, they can furnish no proof or evidence at all of its divine authority: that the Old Testament is a scheme of superstition and imposture; and that the New Testament, as we now have it, is a jumble of inconsistent religions; that Jesus was not the Christ foretold by the prophets, though he himself, and all his apostles after him, declared him to be so; that the apostles preached different Gospels; and that the accounts of facts, or of doctrines and laws, given by Christ's own disciples, are not to be depended upon: any man that should assert this, and with his utmost art and malice set himself to expose and blacken the Sacred Writings, and the characters of those that wrote them, and yet all the while, with a grave face, call himself a Christian; yea, and face the world down that he is a better Christian than those that receive the Scriptures and the doctrines taught by Christ and his apostles as of divine authority, must have no small share of assurance, and presume very much upon the indulgence or the stupidity of mankind.

But our author urges, that 'nothing can be plainer than this, that there is no such thing as historical infallibility, but that all men are liable to error, not only in remote and supernatural events, but even with regard to the most common affairs and things near at hand.' And he thinks I ought to have 'proved this infallibility, at least with respect to the sacred historians, and not have supposed it, as I have done all along,' p. 3. But if the extraordinary miraculous facts, whereby the Mosaical and Christian Revelation is attested, were of such a nature that those that were witnesses to

them, could be as sure of them as any man can be of what he hears and sees, and, consequently, could not be deceived or imposed upon themselves, in the facts they relate, without renouncing the testimony of all their senses; and if, at the same time, it can be shown that we have the highest reason to think that they were persons of great probity and simplicity, and who had no intention to deceive others; yea, and that, as the case was circumstanced, it was not in their power to have imposed these facts upon the world if they had not been true; this lays a just foundation for depending upon the accounts they give as certain and true. And that this is the case with regard to the extraordinary facts done in attestation of the Mosaic and Christian dispensation, I have not merely supposed, but proved at large elsewhere.* And when to this it is added, that the persons by whom those accounts are given, gave the most manifest proofs of their being under an extraordinary divine guidance, which has been shown to be the case of Moses, and of the apostles too†, to whom our Saviour had promised his Spirit to guide them in what they testified concerning him, and to bring things to their remembrance; then there is a sufficient historical infallibility, if this author is resolved to use this word, for us reasonably to depend upon.

There is no occasion, therefore, for the great concern this writer, in his laudable zeal for Christianity expresses, lest this should be a placing religion upon a very weak, precarious, and uncertain bottom. He is afraid, good man, this will give advantage to atheists and infidels; because if any plain instances can be brought of errors, mistakes, or inconsistencies, in the sacred writers, it will be enough to set aside their inspiration, and immediate divine authority. For if they were not infallible in one case, they might not in another: and if they were not immediately inspired in historical matters, who can prove that they were in doctrinals? And then he observes, that 'such are the wretched shifts to which those must be driven, who place infallibility and certainty in any thing else, but the necessary immutable truth, reason, and fitness of things,' p. 3. This, it seems, and not historical infallibility, must be the 'rock upon which Christ has built his church, and against which all the powers of earth and hell cannot prevail,' p. 4.

Christianity surely is very much obliged to this writer, who is so mightily concerned to take it off the uncertain bottom of the writings of the apostles and prophets, and is for placing it upon an impregnable rock, against which earth and hell cannot prevail, viz. 'the eternal, immutable reason and fitness of things,' in which alone infallibility and certainty can be found. I wish he had more distinctly explained what this reason and fitness of things is, and what this infallibility is, that he supposes to lie in the fitness of things. Does he mean an infallibility in our judgments concerning it? or, that we do of ourselves certainly and infallibly know the whole fitness of things as far as relates to us?

* See 'Answer to Christianity,' &c., vol. ii. chap. 2.

† See Divine Author, p. 19, 30, 371, 372, &c.

This is scarce consistent with what he himself, elsewhere, acknowledges, that human reason, in matters of religion, had been, in a great measure, lost amidst the general ignorance, superstition, and idolatry of mankind, p. 55. And if so, I cannot but think, it must be a mighty advantage to have the truths, relating to religion, cleared and confirmed to us by a divine authority and testimony. And that the bulk of mankind would be in much greater danger of erring and going wrong, if left to themselves to collect the whole of religion, and their duty, as well as they could, from the nature of things, by their own reason, than if they had the doctrines and principles of it laid before them, and the duties of it enforced upon them in plain propositions, contained in books written under the guidance of the Divine Spirit.

But here, it seems, the danger lies, in supposing that the Scriptures were written by divine revelation or inspiration from God. He affects to be in a doubt, whether I will dare to take upon me to assert this. And he argues against it thus: 'if the revelation consists in the moral doctrines and obligations of Scripture, all morality will be revelation; or if it consists in the historical facts, all history will be revelation. But if it neither consists in the moral doctrines, nor historical facts, I wonder where he will find it. At this rate he (speaking of me) must go out of the Bible, and look for his revelation somewhere else,' p. 6. This, it must be owned, is very acutely argued, and may serve as a specimen of the clearness and sagacity of this writer. But it doth not follow, that if I believe the moral doctrines of Scripture to be by Divine revelation, and the historical accounts of the extraordinary facts there contained, to have been written under the unerring guidance of the Divine Spirit, that therefore I must believe all morality, and all history, to be revelation; except it can be proved, that I have the same reason to believe all other writers of morals or doctrines in religion to have been extraordinarily inspired by God, as I have to believe that Moses and the prophets, or that Christ and his apostles, were so; and that all other historians were equally under a divine guidance as those who wrote the accounts of the facts in the law and gospels. And when the author proves this, I shall acknowledge the force of his argument, and shall look upon him to be a very great man.

I can see no reason at all for the extreme surprise he seems to be in, that any man should venture to assert that the sacred writers were under a divine unerring guidance. Since there is nothing in this but what is reasonable and consistent, supposing such a revelation to have been really given. For if God designed a revelation for the use of mankind, which he communicated to a person, or persons, to be by them published to the world in his name, and by his authority; and if he gave them the most illustrious credentials, to convince mankind of their divine mission, and enabled them by his own divine power, to work the most extraordinary miracles, in attestation of the revelation they published in his name, it is but reasonable, to suppose, that he would also (if he

were able to do it, which will scarcely be denied) guide and assist their minds in publishing and delivering that revelation to the world, so as to keep them from error in delivering it; because, otherwise, that revelation would not answer the end, nor could men safely depend upon its authority, either as to the doctrines to be believed, or laws to be obeyed. And upon supposition, that that revelation was designed for the lasting use and direction of mankind in succeeding ages, it is equally reasonable, to conclude, that he would also guide and assist them by his Spirit, in committing that revelation to writing, together with an account of the main facts, or miraculous attestations, whereby it was originally confirmed and established. An unerring guidance, in this case, is equally possible, and equally fit and necessary, as in the other. And it may be said, in some respects, that it was of greater importance to keep them from erring in what was thus written, for the instruction of all succeeding ages, than in what they delivered by word of mouth. This is a consistent scheme, harmonious in all its parts, and worthy of the divine wisdom and goodness. But to suppose that God discovered his will, in a way of extraordinary revelation, to any person or persons, to be by them communicated in his name, and by his authority, for the use of mankind; and that he interposed by the most extraordinary and miraculous attestations, to confirm the revelation they published, and to engage mankind to receive it as true and divine, and, yet, that he did not guide and assist them in delivering that revelation to others, which they received from him, but left them to themselves to publish falsehood as well as truth, and at the same time, still continue to give the most illustrious attestations to them, and to their doctrine, whilst they were doing so; or, to suppose, that he guided them unerringly in publishing that revelation, by word of mouth, to that age, and yet did not assist and guide them in committing that revelation to writing with the original attestations, whereby its divine authority was established, though it was designed for the lasting use and benefit of succeeding ages; this would be an absurd, self-confounding scheme, and would be to charge the Supreme Being with an inconsistent conduct, which a wise and good man could scarcely be guilty of.

I am in no great pain about the author's 'plain proofs of errors, mistakes, and inconsistencies, in the sacred writers,' which, he is afraid, 'would be enough to set aside their inspiration, and immediate divine authority; and would give advantage to atheists and infidels.' Many gentlemen of his complexion have made attempts this way, but they have hitherto failed of making good their charge. He may, undoubtedly, without great difficulty, find objections of this kind made ready to his hand, in several that have gone before him in this cause; and he may also, if he pleases, find sufficient answers made to them.

He goes on to observe, pp. 6, 7, that 'by revelation, one would think, should be understood the discovery of some doctrines or duties in religion that had never been known before, and which

were above the search or investigation of human reason. In this sense it has been commonly represented by the learned, and conceived and applied by the vulgar and unlearned.' This the author repeats in many parts of his book. He all along represents it as if revelation were, by those he is pleased to call systematical divines, wholly confined to things above reason; or, as he expresses it, pp. 55, 56, 'that they take revelation, or revealed religion, to be nothing else but a new set of doctrines, absolutely above and beyond the investigation and judgment of human reason.' And yet he cannot but know, that as they hold the Scriptures to be given by inspiration of God, so they look upon the Christian revelation to contain all the doctrines and laws delivered by Christ and his apostles; among which are many doctrines and principles of natural religion, which are not absolutely above the search, investigation, or perception, as he sometimes expresses it, of human reason; though they were greatly obscured and perverted through the corruption of mankind. And it hath always been acknowledged to be one valuable end of divine revelation, to recover men to the right knowledge and firm belief of those principles and duties which, though not wholly unknown before, nor absolutely above the search of human reason, yet were encumbered with much darkness, and had, in a great measure, lost their force, at least, among the bulk of mankind; as well as to discover several things in religion, which, though very useful when known, the mere reason of man could not have known, with certainty, without such assistance.

This writer, indeed, will not allow that any thing was discovered by the gospel, but what was as well known before. He observes, that revelation, as taken for the discovery of any new doctrines, will have but very little or no foundation in the New Testament. And he then endeavours to show, that our Lord Jesus Christ, as both he and St. Paul declare, 'came not to set up any new religion, or new revelation, but to restore the old religion, and the true Abrahamic righteousness that had taken place before the giving of the law, and by which Abraham, Noah, Enoch, and all good men, from the beginning of the world, had been justified and accepted of God. And this justifying acceptable righteousness was the filial love of God, and brotherly love to mankind,' &c. It is very true, that the faith by which Abraham and the patriarchs were justified, and that of good men under the gospel, is fundamentally the same: for faith, in both cases, doth include a firm trust in God, a belief of the revelations and discoveries he makes of his will, and a dependence on his promises, all issuing in good works and sincere obedience. But it doth not follow, that therefore there is nothing discovered, under the gospel, but what was as clearly discovered and revealed to Abraham and the patriarchs before; though undoubtedly the same faith for which Abraham was so eminent, and which caused him to believe in God, and in the revelations he then gave, would have led him actually to believe in Jesus Christ, and to receive the discoveries he brought, if he

had lived after Christ's actual manifestation in the flesh. But our author further urges, that 'the faith which was intended to be introduced and established by this new dispensation, or old religion revived, was that faith which makes and denominates men faithful; and the want of faith or infidelity was always the want of faith or faithfulness, with respect to the filial love of God, and the brotherly love of mankind, and such acts of moral truth and righteousness as must flow from it. And that in all this saving and justifying scheme, there is not one word or tittle of an historical faith; and that no man was ever blamed or condemned for not believing the history,' &c. p. 8. To open the true design of this paragraph it must be observed, that, with this writer, the belief of any facts whatsoever, that are recorded in Scripture, must pass for an historical faith: and consequently the belief that there was such a person as Jesus Christ; that God sent him into the world to save sinners; that he wrought such and such illustrious miracles, that he taught such or such doctrines, and delivered such discourses; that he suffered, and died for our sins; that he rose again from the dead, and ascended up into heaven, and is now in a state of exaltation, and shall come again the second time, &c. All this is historical faith, and therefore, in this author's account, of no necessity or importance at all. But whatever he himself thinks of it, he should not pretend to put it upon the world, as if the New Testament also supposed this faith to be of no necessity or importance; when everybody knows, that is at all acquainted with those sacred writings, that faith in Christ is there insisted on as necessary to our acceptance with God, where the gospel is published and made known. And how a man can be said to believe in Jesus Christ, and yet not believe the gospel history, which takes in the things he said and did, is hard to know. Our author, in his letter to Eusebius, acknowledges, that the other apostles and teachers of the circumcision urged the necessity of an actual explicit faith and profession of Christ; but insinuates, that in this they went much farther than the apostle Paul, who declares, that justifying faith had been, in all ages, the same.* But that apostle expresseth himself as fully and strongly on this head as any of the rest. Thus he saith to the 'Corinthians, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also you have received, and wherein ye stand; by which also ye are saved. For I delivered unto you, first of all, that which also I received; how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that he was buried, and rose again,' &c. 1 Cor. xv. 1—4. And when he elsewhere saith, 'The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that is, the word of faith which we preach; that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness,' &c. 'Rom. x. 8, 9, 10. I am afraid this great apostle, for

whom this writer frequently professes a mighty veneration, must now pass in his esteem for as great abettor of historical faith as any of the rest. It is true, that we are taught both by St. Paul and the other apostles, that the believing in Jesus Christ, if separated from the fruits of righteousness, will not justify or save a man. But this doth not prove, that that faith is not necessarily required of the gospel; no more than it will prove, that it is unnecessary to believe a God or a Providence; because the bare belief of this, alone considered, will not save a man.

There is one general remark that must occur to every man that reads the author's book, and that is, that he all along represents his adversaries as renouncing all evidence from nature and reason in matters of religion, as putting it solely upon positive authority, and abstracting entirely from all consideration of the fitness of things. This he frequently charges upon me. And in the same manner he represents his learned adversary Mr. Chapman, as 'setting up miracles as a criterion of divine faith, and of revelation, above reason, 'in opposition to the nature, reason, and fitness of things' as appearing to the understanding,' Lett. to Euseb. p. 29. I shall take some notice of this here, that I may not be obliged to return to it on all occasions.

I freely grant, and it is granted by every divine who has wrote in this controversy, that whatever is proved by clear and evident reason, from the nature of the thing, may be justly received upon the strength of that reason and evidence. But since it is manifest in fact and experience, and our author himself doth not deny it, that mankind are involved in great darkness and corruption, and if left to themselves, are very prone to entertain wrong apprehensions in matters of religion, and to neglect and counteract their duty in very important instances, an extraordinary revelation from God, in which we are assured of the truth of doctrines in religion, and have the duties of it enjoined and enforced upon us by the express testimony and authority of God himself; would be of signal benefit, and a great instance of the divine goodness and compassion towards us.

But, then, supposing such a revelation really given, there must be some way of proving to men, that it is indeed a revelation from God, and to be regarded as of divine authority; and that the persons professing to have received it from God, and who published it to the world in his name, were indeed sent by God, and did receive those doctrines and laws by extraordinary revelation from him. And here it is that the proof from miracles properly comes in, as an illustrious attestation given by God to the divine mission of these persons, and to the divine original of those doctrines and laws; and, that, consequently, they are to be received as of divine authority. And this divine authority, when once it can be proved, would be of equal use, both to give men a more certain knowledge and assurance even of those things, which, however, absolutely speaking, they are certainly discoverable by our natural reason, yet in the present corrupt state of mankind, are

encumbered with much darkness and prejudices: and also more distinctly to describe and specify the particulars of moral duty, and give them a greater force, and urge them upon us with more powerful motives; and, lastly, to assure us of things which it is a great advantage to us to know; and which yet we could not otherwise have known, or not with sufficient clearness and certainty.

It is manifest, that upon this scheme, we are under no obligation or necessity to renounce any proof or evidence that can be brought for any principle or precept in religion from the nature and reason of the thing. Revelation leaves all the proofs of religion drawn from the nature of things in their full force, and in all their light and evidence; and adds to them the attestation of a divine authority and testimony. We have all the advantage of arguments from the reason and nature of things that this writer can justly pretend to have, with this farther advantage, that besides this we have the assistance of extraordinary revelation of a divine testimony, which gives a farther degree of certainty and evidence.

There is, therefore, a perfect harmony upon this scheme between reason and revelation, and between natural religion and revealed; though this writer pretends, that in 'the way of spiritual scholasticism (as he thinks proper to express it) natural and revealed religion are two essentially different religions,' which he thinks 'looks like a setting up imperium in imperio,' p. 54. And though I do not take revelation to be nothing else but mere natural religion revived, yet I look upon it to be an important end and use of revelation farther to clear, confirm, and establish the main principles and duties of natural religion. The question, therefore, between him and me, is not, as he is pleased to put it, p. 56, about rational and sensible religion, or whether sense or reason are most to be depended upon in matters of religion. As if I was for renouncing reason and depending only upon sense in matters of religion; or, as if he was for a rational religion, and I was against it. But the question really is, whether human reason, guided and assisted by an extraordinary divine revelation, confirmed by the authority and testimony of God himself; or reason left to itself, without that assistance, be of most use and service in matters of religion.

This gentleman seems all along to value himself mightily upon it, that he is for placing religion upon a firm and immoveable foundation, the reason and fitness of all things; and he saith that what I mean by revelation, is a 'supposed positive religion, founded upon mere authority, without any other or farther reason,' p. 14. One would think, by his representation of the matter, that revelation, according to my notion of it, is 'merely a positive religion,' as opposed to that which is founded in the nature of things; and that I do not suppose that revealed religion hath any foundation at all in nature or reason. And so he would pass it upon the world, that his religion truly is founded in the reason and fitness of things, but that which we plead for is not. I will therefore tell him once for all, that I look upon revealed religion to have a real foundation in the nature and fitness of things. For all truth hath a real fitness

in it, or is agreeable to the nature of things. And I am satisfied, that there is a real fitness in the whole work and method of our redemption and salvation by Jesus Christ; that is, that it is really agreeable to the just order of things, to the relations between God and us, to the honor of the divine government and excellencies, and that it is highly for the advantage and happiness of mankind. But the question is not, whether that which is true and fit in matters of religion is to be admitted, but which is the best way of getting a right information and assurance of that truth and fitness. And the way this writer seems to propose, as far as I can comprehend his design, is for every man to collect the whole of religion, in principle and practice, from the nature of things by his own reason, independent on all authority; a work to which the greatest part of mankind are manifestly incompetent. He seems all along to think, that if he can but say that truth is founded in nature, or the reason and fitness of things, this is sufficient to show, that in this case we are not to be assured of it by authority. But this doth not follow, except it can be proved that the whole reason and fitness of things is open to us. It is evident, that a thing may be in itself fit and reasonable, and yet we may not be able merely of ourselves demonstrably to prove it to be so, for want of taking in a full view and comprehension of those things that are necessary to form a clear and certain judgment concerning it. And now where is the mighty advantage of his scheme, which he extols as of so much use to mankind? We have all the light of reason to assist us that he can boast of, and are as much at liberty to make a just use of it in searching and examining into the reason and nature of things: and besides this, we have the additional light of extraordinary revelation; or a divine authority and testimony. And I may appeal to the common sense of mankind, whether this is not a great advantage where it can be had. For surely it must be acknowledged, that God may ascertain us of things, which, however they have a fitness in themselves, we should not have known, or not have known so certainly, without that information and assistance. And that if he assureth us of things by his own testimony or authority, that testimony or authority may be safely depended upon; and that this would come with a far greater force, and give a more satisfying assurance and certainty to the mind than the opinions of mere philosophers and moralists.

But I shall have occasion to say more on this head afterwards, when I come to examine what he offers to show, that no authority can be depended on at all in matters of religion. And shall now proceed to another remark, on our author's manner of writing; and that is, his confused jumbling together questions which are entirely distinct, and so perplexing and confounding the debate. Whether this be owing to a confusion of things in his own understanding, or to art and design, or to both together, I shall not determine; but to whatsoever it is owing, it is not a very proper way of writing for an author that sets up to enlighten mankind in things of 'the utmost consequence in religion.'

In p. 46, he pretends to state the question between him and me. He saith, the 'only question between us is concerning the principal characteristic, or medium of proof, by which we are to perceive or judge of divine truth, or of truth as coming from God.' And then he adds, 'here the author (speaking of me) seems to think, that human testimony and authority, weak and fallible as it is, yet is both sufficient, and the only means of conveying such truth to us, who cannot pretend to any immediate personal inspiration or revelation in the case. But it is certain (says he) that divine authority, as founded upon human authority, must be liable to all the weakness, uncertainty, failures, and imperfections of such human authority. Since the superstructure can never be stronger than the foundation, nor the conclusion clearer than the premises from which it is drawn.'

All the strength of this lies wholly in the obscurity of it, and in jumbling things together which are of distinct consideration. It is manifest that he here confounds the questions, concerning the original proofs of a divine revelation, supposed to be given in former ages, and concerning the means or manner of conveying that revelation with those proofs to us. But these are distinct questions, and to be considered distinctly.

It is one question, how we come to know that the Christian religion, as preached by Christ and his apostles, came originally from God in a way of extraordinary revelation; and the answer to this is, that it came attended with such a series of illustrious miraculous attestations as gave a full testimony to the divine mission of the persons by whom it was published, and to the truth and divine original of the doctrines and laws. But it is another question, what ground we have to think that that original revelation, or the doctrines and laws, together with an account of those extraordinary miraculous attestations are safely transmitted to us, in such a manner, that we may have a reasonable assurance that they are the doctrines and laws that were originally given, and that these facts were really done.

The questions were distinctly treated in the book he pretends to answer; the former, p. 16, &c. the latter, p. 36, &c. But this writer, whose advantage lies in perplexing matters, perpetually confounds the question concerning the means of conveying a revelation to us with that concerning the proper proofs of its original authority; as if, because the writings in which that original revelation is contained, are conveyed to us through the hands of fallible men, therefore the divine authority of that revelation is founded upon human authority, as a superstructure upon its foundation, and a conclusion upon the principles from which it is drawn.

But it is evident to every one, that the question whether a writing or law be faithfully conveyed to us, is one thing, and the question concerning the authority of that writing or law, and the grounds of its obligation, is another. That which gives a law its authority, is its having been enacted by the legislature. Let us suppose such a law committed to writing; and that an age or two after, some

person is accused for transgressing that law. He denies its authority. Why? Because it comes to us through the hands of printers, clerks, keepers of records, &c. and these are not legislators, nor can pretend to any authority to make laws; and the authority of those laws must depend wholly upon the authority of the persons by whom they are conveyed to us. For it is certain that the legislative authority, as founded upon the authority of printers, clerks, &c. must be liable to all the weakness, failures, &c. of their authority, and can be of no other or higher kind than their authority is; since the 'superstructure can never be stronger than the foundation, nor the conclusion clearer than the principles from which it is drawn.' I doubt this way of arguing would hardly be admitted in our courts of judicature as sufficient to set aside the authority of our laws; and if any man seriously made such a plea as this, he would hardly be judged to be in his right senses. But any kind of reasoning will go down, when brought against the authority of divine revelation.

It is on the same confused jumble of things that that censure is founded which he passes upon me, p. 50. That my 'scheme necessarily leads me to place the most important, or divine truth upon the foot of human fallible authority.' And every where, through his whole book, he insists upon it, as if this alone was sufficient to destroy the authority of the Scripture revelation, that it is transmitted to us through the hands of fallible men; and that to lay any stress upon the authority of a revelation that is thus conveyed to us, is to lay the whole stress of religion on fallible human authority. But if the original revelation, when first given and published, was of divine authority, and if that revelation was committed to writing, and we have sufficient evidence that that original revelation is safely transmitted to us without any material corruption or alteration, then it is as much of divine authority now as it was at first, and we are as much obliged to receive and submit to it, as if we had received it immediately from the persons by whom it was first published in the name of God. A revelation or law, if it had any real original divine authority, does not lose that authority by being committed to writing. Nor does its authority depend on the intermediate conveyers, but on the proofs of its having been originally given by revelation from God, as the authority of a law formerly enacted, depends not upon the persons through whose hands it is transmitted to us, but upon its having been originally enacted by the legislature. It is therefore to no purpose to object, as this writer does, p. 13, that we cannot depend upon that revelation, 'because the intermediate conveyers, as not being inspired or infallible themselves, might mistake the sense of the first promulgers, or give us a wrong account of it,' p. 13. For if the writings of those first promulgers are conveyed safe to us, then it is nothing to us whether the intermediate conveyers be fallible or not: for in that case we judge of the sense of the first promulgers, not by the opinion of the intermediate conveyers, but by the very words of the original promulgers committed to writing; and in that case may as properly be said to have that revelation in our hands, and may as properly be governed by

the doctrines and laws of it, as if we had lived in the age when it was first promulgated, and had then heard it published by word of mouth.

That an original divine revelation may be transmitted to us through the hands of fallible men, in a manner that may be safely depended on, was shown in my former book, p. 22, &c. And his learned adversary, Mr. Chapman, has considered this more largely and fully. To all which this writer has nothing to oppose but general clamors, which he repeats on all occasions, about the 'uncertainty and infinite confusion of history, and fallible human testimony.' This may possibly take with some that will not give themselves the trouble of thinking, and are carried away by mere sounds; but cannot have any influence on men of sense. It will easily be allowed this writer what he wisely observes, that all 'men are liable to error, and that even with regard to the most common affairs and things nigh at hand,' p. 3. But does it follow, that therefore no man can ever be certain of any thing; no, not even of what he hears or sees? Men may be deceived by human testimony; but does this prove, that therefore no human testimony can, in any case, be certainly depended on; I know it only by the testimony of fallible men, that there is such a place as Paris or Rome, or such a part of the world as America, for I never was there; and yet I am as reasonably certain of this as I am of my own existence. It is only by what the author calls 'human fallible testimony, that I believe any past facts whatsoever; that I believe there was such a king as Charles the First, and that he was beheaded, or that there were civil wars between king and parliament, or between the houses of York and Lancaster, and yet I have as little reasonable ground to doubt of them as if I had lived in those times, and seen those events myself. It is undeniably evident, that the most of our knowledge does, and in the present state of mankind must, come in this way; and that without it no advantage could be made of the knowledge, experience, and observations of past ages. It is in this method that all our laws, records, &c. are conveyed. And why then should it be thought absurd, that writings, containing an account of doctrines or facts relating to religion, should be also transmitted in this way; that is, in the only way of conveyance that, in the present constitution of the world and of mankind, is left for transmitting any past writings, laws, or facts to succeeding ages; and which in many cases may be so circumstanced, that it would be a ridiculous scepticism to doubt of the certainty and safety of the conveyance.

I would, therefore, advise this writer not to trouble the world more with his general confused clamours about 'fallible human testimony,' except he will lay it down as a principle that human testimony, that is, the testimony of men, who are in themselves fallible, can in no case be certainly depended upon. And whenever he shall undertake to prove this, I will undertake to show his absurdity. But if human testimony may give a reasonable certainty, and be depended upon in many cases; and, particularly, if books written, and accounts of facts done in past ages, may be transmitted

to us in such a manner, that no man can reasonably doubt that these writings are safely conveyed, and that these facts were really done, then his mere crying out, that they are transmitted by human testimony, and that the intermediate conveyers were fallible, is all weak, impertinent harangue, and proves nothing at all. It has been often shown, with great evidence, that the conveyance of the sacred writings is such as may justly be depended on; and that we have all the assurance that can be reasonably desired, that they are transmitted safe to us, without any material corruption, either in doctrines or facts. If he would argue to the purpose, let him answer what has been offered on this head, and produce his proofs, to show that the conveyance is uncertain, and not to be depended upon. But this, I doubt, we are never to expect from this writer. If he cannot carry his point by general clamours, he has done his best, and you are to expect no more from him.

I shall conclude this introduction with taking notice of a passage which our author hath, p. 44, where he pretends to sum up the whole argument of my book. He there observes, that my whole work, as to the argumentative part of it, may be reduced to this one syllogism.

‘Whatever God has commanded must be reasonable and fit, and ought, consequently, to be done on the sole foot of his authority, abstracted from any prior reason or fitness of things, as appearing to the understanding.’

‘But God has commanded some things purely indifferent in their own nature, so far as we can see, and other things which must appear unreasonable to our weak understandings, abstracted from such immediate divine authority.’

‘Therefore things indifferent in themselves, or which otherwise might appear unreasonable and unfit to mere human reason, may be reasonable, fit, and necessary by divine authority.’

Any one that had not read my book, and was to form an idea of it, from the account this writer here pretends to give of it, would imagine, that the main design of my book, and what I bent myself laboriously to prove, was, that God may command, and hath actually commanded, things that appear to us ‘unreasonable and unfit,’ and that yet they ought to be done, and to be regarded as ‘reasonable and fit’ on the sole foot of his authority. The major proposition in this syllogism, viz. that ‘whatever God has commanded must be reasonable and fit, and ought, consequently, to be done on the sole foot of his authority,’ &c.; I had little occasion to meddle with except in the case of Abraham. And there also, I mentioned it as a concession of our author’s own, and a principle which he himself allowed to be reasonable.* And as to the minor proposition in the above syllogism, viz. that God ‘has commanded some things purely indifferent, and other things which must appear unreasonable, &c.’ This, he tells us, is what he has denied,’ as if

* See *Divine Authority*, pp. 91, 92.

this was the main controversy between him and me. It is evident that he here forms his argument, as if I had not only granted, but affirmed, that there are several things commanded both in the Mosaic and Christian dispensation, that 'must appear unreasonable and unfit to our understandings.' But he knows very well, that I was so far from granting this, that on the contrary, the main design of my book was to answer the objections he brought against them, and to show that there is nothing in them that can be proved to be unreasonable or unfit. Nor has he been able to make good his charge in any one instance. But this may give us a specimen of the candour and justice of this writer; and by this, and several other things in this book, one would be apt to think, that he wrote principally for those who should never see or read my book at all, but take his word for what is contained in it.

CHAPTER I.

An examination of what the author represents as the main principles of his book. Their absurdity and inconsistency shown. His account of the nature of truth, and the grounds of its communicability; and the attempt he makes to show that truth cannot be proved by authority, considered. That authority may in many cases be of advantage for ascertaining us of truth, and that a divine authority, or testimony, may be of signal use in matters of religion and morality. This particularly shown with regard to the Christian revelation.

OUR author looks upon the main principles he had advanced in his former book, to be so 'strong and clear,' that 'I could not meddle with the principles themselves, and dared not contradict or argue against them directly;' and that I have therefore 'left all the principles of the book, which I pretended to answer, in their full force,' p. 6. And he repeats it again, p. 9, that I knew very well that I 'could not confute any one general principle or position in the moral philosopher,' p. 9.

I must confess I am something at a loss to know what principles he means. That book is written in so loose and rambling a manner, with so little method or consistency, that it is no easy matter to know what are the main principles of it, and the chief difficulty lies not in confuting, but in understanding them. If there be any thing that can be called the main principle of his book, it is that concerning the 'moral reason and fitness of things,' being the only 'criterion of divine truth,' or of 'truth as coming from God.' And

this principle of his is there expressed in so general and undeterminate a manner, that it is very hard to form a precise idea of what he means by it. But, however, I endeavoured to confute it as far as I understood it. He repeats this principle again in his last book, and expresses it thus, that we 'have no certain mark or criterion of divine or moral truth, or of truth as coming from God, and discovering his will concerning our duty, but the moral reason and fitness of the thing, or its relation to and connexion with our happiness,' p. 12. He thinks it very strange that I should pretend to be under uncertainty as to the meaning of this principle, 'as if it was one of the most perplexed uncertain propositions I had ever met with.' Now, I must own, I am still uncertain about the meaning of it. And I find his other answerer, Mr. Chapman, was as much at a loss what to make of it as myself. That learned writer has turned the proposition several ways, and in every sense that he could think of has found it to be absurd. The wisest thing, in my opinion, our author could have done, would have been silently to have dropped this principle, and not have put the world in mind of it any more. But, without taking the least notice of what had been offered against it, he securely repeats it, or refers to it, on all occasions, in his last book. I had endeavoured, in the book he has undertaken to answer,* to put this principle of his in terms that might have rendered it something more intelligible; but since he gives me no thanks for this, but is resolved to go on in his own way, let us take it as he himself has been pleased here to express it, and see what can be made of it, and wherein its great strength and usefulness lies.

The professed design of this principle, as advanced by our author, is to set before us the only, sure, and infallible criterion by which we are to judge of all truth whatsoever relating to religion, and by attending to which, we may be safely and certainly guided what truths we are to receive as coming from God. Now, this principle, as here expressed by him, seems to be in no way fitted to answer that purpose. It is evident (as I had observed in my former book, p. 4, 5,) that there are doctrines in religion, and those too of considerable importance, which we are to believe, as well as propositions immediately and directly relating to the duties which we are to practise. Now this principle of the author's, according to the account he here gives of it, seems only to relate to the latter of these. For the truth of which he here proposes to give the criterion, is 'divine or moral truth, or truth as coming from God, and discovering his will concerning our duty.' Where, by 'divine or moral truth,' he seems to understand such truth as 'discovers the will of God concerning our duty; that is, such truth as relates to the duties which God requires us to practise. So elsewhere, p. 17, he describes 'moral truth' to be the 'reason and fitness of actions, as

* See Divine Authority, p. 6.

founded in the nature of things, and as necessarily connected with and related to the happiness of moral agents ;' this, says he, 'is what I, with others, call divine truth, or truth coming from God.' And, in this sense, his criterion is very defective, and cannot be said to extend to all truths or doctrines, and principles in religion, but only to the 'fitness of actions.' And, even with regard to these, our author's principle is far from being clear and certain. For the only criterion he here lays down, is, what he calls the 'moral reason and fitness of the thing ;' and this moral reason and fitness he explains to be its 'relation to and connexion with our happiness.' So that, it seems, nothing is to be admitted as a proof or evidence of any thing's being the will of God, concerning our duty, but its appearing to our own minds or understandings to be in the nature of the thing connected with our happiness. But here, again, another doubt arises ; what kind of relation to or connexion with our happiness, a thing must have, in order to its being morally fit and reasonable. For this author frequently expresses himself as if he understod it only of a necessary and immutable connexion with our happiness. Thus, p. 16, he describes 'moral truth' to be that which discovers to us the 'necessary relations and qualifications of actions as connected with our happiness.' And, p. 17, that it is the reason and fitness of actions, as founded in the nature of things, and as 'necessarily connected with and related to the happiness of moral agents.' And he expresses himself, in many other places, after the same manner. And then the meaning of his principle must be this, that nothing is to be admitted, as true or obligatory, in matters of practice and morality, but what is in the nature of things 'necessarily connected' with our happiness ; and at that rate, though a thing may be of great advantage, and manifestly conducive to our happiness ; yet, if it be not necessarily connected with it, it will not be any part of our duty. In like manner he often talks of the 'immutable, eternal reason and fitness of things,' and represents this as the same thing with what he elsewhere calls the 'moral reason and fitness of actions.' As if nothing could be fit at all but what is unchangeably fit, or fit at one time, and in one circumstance, but what is fit at all times and in all circumstances. And upon this view of his principle the design of it is to show, that though a thing appears to us to be fit as the case is circumstanced, yet it is not to be done, nor can it be the will of God that we should do it, except it can be proved to have a natural, unchangeable, eternal fitness in all cases, and all circumstances. But this would be both absurd in itself, as it would exclude several particulars of our duty, several things which, as they are circumstanced, would be of considerable use and importance to our happiness ; and would also be contrary to what he himself elsewhere acknowledges. For after having observed, that 'all wise states and governments have ever found it necessary to abrogate and alter the old, or to enact new laws, according to mutable and variable relations and circumstances of persons in society ;' he adds, 'that this will equally

hold good, when applied to the laws of God himself. For what God would require at one time, and in such particular relations and circumstances, he would not require at another time, under other relations, and quite different or contrary circumstances.' See *Mor. Phil.* vol. i. p. 207.

But to give this author all possible advantage, let us suppose that his principle is not to be understood according to the obvious meaning and propriety of the expressions; but, that, when he talks of the 'unchangeable eternal reason and fitness of things, he intends also to take in those things that are not unchangeably and eternally fit, but are only so occasionally, and in such and such circumstances; and that when he speaks of a thing's being necessary to our happiness, he does not merely understand that which is simply and properly necessary to our happiness, but that which is conducive to it. For so I find he expresses himself, p. 13, where he talks of the 'natural tendency and moral fitness of actions as conducive to true happiness.' Such is the way of this writer, as if a thing's being 'necessarily connected with our happiness,' and its 'being conducive to our happiness,' were terms of the same extent and signification. Though the distinction between them is very obvious, and it is manifest that many things, which are not necessary in the nature of things, may yet be conducive, and have a subserviency to promote our happiness various ways. And if we take this principle in this sense, that a thing's appearing to us to be conducive to our happiness, is a sufficient and the only proof we can have of its being the will of God concerning our duty, this would be to leave the doctrine of morals very loose, and on a very uncertain foundation. At this rate, men are to set up their own advantage precisely as the measure of their duty. It is left wholly to themselves whether and how far they shall obey, viz. so far only as they apprehend a thing to be for their own benefit, and no farther; and of this every man is to be judge for himself. To put all duty and obedience merely upon this foot would go a great way to dissolve all bands of government human and divine; especially considering how most men are governed in judging of what is conducive to their happiness, by present sense and appetite. And even those that pretend to be governed by cool reason, will be far from agreeing how far appetite must be indulged or restrained, or what things are for our good, or the contrary.

It appears, then, that this main principle of our author's concerning the only infallible criterion, whereby we are to judge of divine truth, as it does not properly relate to principles or doctrines (which yet it ought to do, in order to answer the end he proposes by it) but only to the 'moral fitness of actions;' so when it is applied to this it is very loose, and either will be apt to lead persons astray, if they have no other rule to go by in judging of the will of God concerning their duty, or will be of very little use and significance. To tell a man in general, when he wants to know what is the will of God concerning his duty, that he must do those things which are

necessarily connected with, or which are conducive to, his own happiness, is not to give him any certain directions in the knowledge of his duty; since it is evident that in the present corrupt state of mankind, men, if left to themselves, are often apt to be greatly mistaken in judging of their own happiness, and the things that are connected with it. Or if we come to the particulars of our duty, it may in many cases be hard to convince a man that what is urged upon him as his duty is really necessary and conducive to his happiness; abstracting from all authority enjoining it. The author of 'Christianity as old as the creation,' who had also advanced this principle of judging of our duty, by what appears to us to be for our own happiness, in order to put this rule in practice, advises men 'so to regulate their natural appetites, as will most conduce to the exercise of their reason, the health of their bodies, and the pleasure of their senses taken and considered together, since therein their happiness consists.'

This is the rule he prescribes for instructing mankind in general, the meanest, the most illiterate, not excepted, in their duty; as if it were a very easy thing for the vulgar to weigh and compare all these, and to form an exact judgment accordingly. I think I may appeal to the common sense of mankind, whether they could not much more easily and certainly find out their duty and happiness, by some plain revelation from God, confirmed by his own authority, determining the particulars of their duty, and instructing them wherein true happiness doth consist, and which is the best way to obtain it, than if they were left to themselves to collect it, by considering and comparing all these. I shall now leave our author to make the best he can of his main principle, and proceed to some other things which he seems to lay a stress upon, as very certain, and of very great importance.

When he talks, pp. 5, 6, of those principles of his, which are 'so clear and strong, that I could not meddle with them, and dared not to contradict or argue against them directly;' one of those principles, it seems, is this, that 'the divine authority of any person or doctrine cannot be proved from miracles.' If he had said I had not confuted this principle, or was not able to confute it, nobody would have wondered at his saying so, because he will never allow that any man ever did confute, or can confute any one principle he has once advanced. But it was certainly wrong to say I never 'meddled with it, and that I durst not contradict or argue against it directly,' when he knows my first chapter was designed on purpose against this principle, and that I there bend myself to show that miracles may be of such a nature, and so circumstanced, as to yield a satisfying proof of the divine mission of persons, and of the divine original and authority of doctrines. And whether he has been able to invalidate what I have offered on this head, will appear, when I come to consider what he has advanced in this book to the contrary.

Another of his principles, which are too clear and strong to be

contradicted, as laid down in the forecited passage, p. 6, is this, 'That the truth, certainty, and importance of the doctrines, prove the authority of the person as divine, but not the authority of the person the truth of the doctrines.' This principle, which he will have to be so clear and strong, that nobody dare attempt to confute it, is expressed in so confused and ambiguous a way, that it is no easy matter to understand it.

What does he mean by the 'authority of the person as divine,' which the 'truth and certainty of his doctrines is to prove?' Does he mean that where a person, professing to be extraordinarily sent of God, teacheth any doctrines that upon examination appear to be true, and of importance to mankind, this is to be regarded as a proof that he is indeed extraordinarily sent of God; and that because of the certainty and importance of some doctrines he delivers, we may safely, upon his 'authority as divine,' receive other doctrines, which may, perhaps, be in themselves true, but which do not appear to us to be certainly true by any arguments drawn from the nature of the thing, and of which we have no other proof but his authority? 'This, to be sure, he will not allow. Or, is the meaning this, that as far as we can prove by arguments drawn from the nature of the thing, that any of the doctrines that person advanceth are true, and certain, and important, so far we are to believe him in the right, and that he had an authority to declare those doctrines, as every man hath to speak truth? And then this principle, that the 'truth and certainty of the doctrines proves the authority of the person as divine,' is to be understood thus; that when a person teacheth any doctrine, which I find by my own reason to be true and important, and agreeable to the will of God, I am to believe that in that instance he speaks what is true and important, and agreeable to the will of God; and this I may believe, and yet in other instances think him not to be depended on at all. And this is a very pleasant way of proving a person's authority to be divine, since when I have proved it, his authority is to pass for nothing, and I am to believe nothing upon his authority at all. For I am to believe him no further than he can prove what he says to be true from the nature of the thing: which is to allow him no greater credit and authority, than we are willing to allow to the greatest liar; that is, let him prove what he says to be true, and we will believe him. This principle of our author's, therefore, as far as I can understand it, really amounts to this, that whenever I know a man speaks truth, I must believe he speaks truth. A very undoubted principle, and which tends very much to the instruction of mankind, and to enlighten the subject before us. However, he may have this satisfaction in it, that it is a principle which he may enjoy to himself, and in which no mortal will 'dare to contradict him.'

It will be allowed that whatever we know to be true, by arguments drawn from the nature of the thing, we must believe to be true; but then the question still remains, are we never to receive

any thing upon any authority at all? And as far as I can understand this writer, according to him, we are never to receive any thing at all as true, upon any authority whatsoever, human or divine, or upon any other foundation than its own intrinsic evidence. Indeed, in his former book, he seems to allow, that the authority of God might, in some cases, be a reason for believing a thing though we had no manner of proof from the nature of the thing; as in the case of immediate inspiration. 'If God speaks to me immediately and directly,' says he, 'I believe him upon his own authority,' pp. 82, 83, 84. He makes an appearance of saying the same thing in some passages of his present book, particularly p. 44, where he seems to allow, that in case of immediate inspiration, if God should command any thing that appears to be weak, 'unreasonable, and unfit to mere human reason,' it must be 'done on the sole foot of his authority, abstracted from any prior reason or fitness of things, as appearing to our understanding.' But it is evident that he cannot say this in consistency with these principles which he here asserts to be 'so clear and strong' that they are not to be meddled with or contradicted, and which he represents as the main principles of his book. For in the place already cited, viz. p. 6, he lays it down as an undoubted maxim, that 'truth is prior in nature to all authority, and therefore authority cannot be the prior ground and reason of truth.' He has it over again frequently in his book, particularly p. 21, where, after having said, that 'no authority, divine or human, can prove itself,' he adds, 'that it is very plain that truth is, in its own nature and reason of things, prior to all authority, and therefore cannot depend upon it, or be proved by it.' And, again, p. 23, 'what is true in nature and reason, as all religion must be, cannot depend on any authority, since truth is, in its own nature, prior to all authority, and without it no authority can be proved.' From which passages it is evident, that his assertion, if it holds good at all, will hold with regard to all authority, divine and human. 'Truth is prior in nature to all authority, human or divine;' from whence he infers, that, therefore, it cannot depend upon it, or be proved by it. So that, according to him, no truth can be proved by any authority at all; or, which is the same thing, we cannot be ascertained of any truth by any authority at all, whether of God or man; and, consequently, if 'God should speak to me immediately and directly,' I am not to 'believe him upon his authority,' (which yet this author allowed we ought to do) because 'truth is prior to all authority.' This it seems, is one of his clear and strong principles, which entirely subverts his own concessions, and which I did not meddle with before, because I did not understand it, nor had he so plainly avowed it before to be one of the main principles of his book.

But let us now venture to examine it. 'Truth,' says he, 'is prior in nature and reason to all authority.' If the meaning be, and it is the only sense in which it can be admitted, that a thing must

be true in itself, before any authority can show it to be so, this will be easily owned; but it is nothing at all to the purpose. For the question is, supposing a thing to be really and in itself true, by what means may we come to know that it is true; and whether authority may not, in some cases, be a proper medium for ascertaining us of the truth of a thing, which we could not have known to be true, or not so certainly, but by that authority or testimony? This is what this writer seems to deny. And in this he hath the common sense of mankind against him. It is evident, and agreed to, by all that have duly considered the different ways of conveying truth to the mind, that authority, or a competent testimony, is, in many cases, of great use, and a very proper medium of assuring us of the truth of things; and, in some cases, is the only way we have of coming to a certainty about them. Our author himself owns it with regard to what he calls 'truth in fact,' see pp. 11, 15. Though I do not see but if his principle, as here laid down by him, be good for any thing, it will prove, that truth in fact cannot be proved by authority any more than any other truth. For may it not be said, with regard to this as well as other truth, that 'truth is prior in nature to all authority?' that is, a thing must be true in fact before any authority or testimony can make or show it to be so: therefore, according to this author's excellent reasoning, that which is true in fact can never be proved by any authority or testimony whatsoever. It were to be wished this gentleman would produce this way of argument to enlighten our courts of judicature. If any witnesses were to be brought for the proof of any fact, let those witnesses be ever so credible, it would be sufficient to destroy all, to urge, with relation to that fact, that if it be true at all, the truth of it must be 'prior in nature to their testimony or authority,' and therefore it cannot depend upon their testimony, or 'be proved by it; for no authority can prove itself.' It is the truth and certainty of the thing itself that must prove the authority of those persons or witnesses, and not their authority or testimony the truth and certainty of the thing. But, it seems, this way of talking, which would be hissed at in other matters, must pass for clear and strong in matters of religion; and the persons that reason at this rate, must be esteemed men of extraordinary penetration above the rest of mankind.

But since our author, though in contradiction to his clear and strong principles, seems willing to allow that, with regard to 'truth in fact,' authority may be of use, and we may reasonably depend upon credible testimony; let us see whether it is not equally reasonable for us to receive some things upon testimony or authority, at least a divine one, in matters of religion.

And here I shall consider what he offers on this head in his first section, p. 15, &c. where he proposes distinctly to consider the 'nature of truth' and the 'grounds of its communicability.' He pretends there to treat of this matter with great accuracy and exactness, whereas it has been 'perplexed and confounded by the systematical divines.'

He tells us, that 'whatever is true to us, or true to human understanding, must be either scientifically true, or true in fact.' It is only in regard to that which is 'true in fact, or historical truth,' as he calls it, p. 18, that he there allows any room or use for authority or testimony. As to 'scientific truth,' under which he comprehends all truth, natural and moral, or religious, it is only 'communicable by its own evidence to the understanding,' as he expresseth it, p. 11. And here authority or testimony, according to him, hath no place. It is true he also mentions a 'third set or class of communicable truths,' viz. truths communicable by 'inspiration or immediate revelation,' p. 18, but he mentions this only as a thing found out by our spiritual scholastics or systematical divines, and will have it to relate only to things which are absolutely 'beyond the investigation, perception, or judgment of human reason.' And it is evident to any one that has carefully read his book, that these are things which, in his opinion, have nothing to do with religion at all.

I would observe, by the way, that we may hence judge of the great candour and consistency of this writer, who tells us, p. 5, 'That he has laid it down as a principle of reason, which he endeavoured to prove and exemplify throughout his book, that natural and revealed religion, as to their subject matter, are one and the same; and are distinguished only with regard to the different method of teaching, or manner of conveyance.' Here he expresses himself as if he really acknowledged a true and proper revelation from God, the design of which is to clear and confirm the great truths and duties of natural religion; and that this revealed religion differs from natural religion 'in the manner of its conveyance.' The obvious meaning of which seems to be this, that whereas the one is communicated to the mind by the exercise of our own reason, in the ordinary natural use of our faculties; the other is communicated from God in a way of immediate inspiration, or what this author himself calls supernatural illumination. And, accordingly, he sometimes speaks of the usefulness of revelation for clearing and confirming natural religion, see particularly p. 55. But by comparing this with what he here says, it appears, that this is only designed to amuse the reader, and to make a show of saying a thing that he does not really believe. For when he proposes distinctly to treat of the nature of truth, and the means of communicating it, he treats inspiration and immediate revelation as the mere invention of the school-divines, and will not allow it to have any place with regard to the principles of natural religion, or moral truth, but only with regard to things above reason, that is, with regard to things which, according to him, are of no use, and have nothing to do with religion at all.

But let us return to what he offers concerning this scientific truth, as he calls it, and under which he comprehends all natural and moral truth. The general account he gives of it is this, that it 'depends upon the abstract nature and reason of things, as eternally, necessarily, and immutably the same.' And he tells us, that 'the

truths of this class, or such as are scientific, being eternal and immutable, as founded in the necessary relations of things, in the agreement or disagreement of their ideas, must appear to all understandings alike, and always the same, when once they come to be proposed in their natural order, and perceived by the mind.'

Now this description which he here gives of scientific truth will only hold with regard to some general principles in natural philosophy or morals; but there are many other things, and of considerable consequence, which cannot pretend to that degree of evidence, and yet we have great reason to think them true. It is plain to any one that is acquainted with human nature, and with the present state of the world and of mankind, that by far the greater part of that knowledge which is most useful to us comes, not in a way of scientific evidence and certainty, but in a way of probability, which yet in many cases rises so high, that we cannot reasonably withhold our assent. And to confine all truth in naturals or morals, as our author here seems to do, to that which is scientifically true, and which must appear to all understandings alike, as if nothing but what is capable of demonstrative evidence were to be admitted in reason or religion, is to reduce our knowledge to a very narrow compass, and under pretence of setting it on a better foundation, to discard the far greater part of it as useless and uncertain.

And even with regard to things which, strictly speaking, are capable of being absolutely demonstrated, authority may in several cases be of great use, and may be reasonably depended on; e. g. with regard to the truths and principles of the mathematics and natural philosophy, which he here calls 'scientific natural truth,' it is evident that in many cases men may come very reasonably to be assured of the truth and certainty of some of those principles in a way of authority. No man would judge it unreasonable for a person that does not understand the mathematics, or not sufficiently, to believe a proposition that Sir Isaac Newton has demonstrated, and which the ablest mathematicians acknowledge to be so. As to what he calls 'scientific moral truth,' he describes it to be that which relates to 'moral practice, and discovers to us the necessary relations and qualifications of actions, as they are connected with our happiness and well being.' And how loose and undeterminate this is, and what little direction it gives in the true knowledge of morals, hath been already shown. He then goes on to observe that this moral truth comprehends under it the 'truths concerning the being and perfections of God, and our necessary relations to him, and the necessary moral reason and fitness of the several obligations towards God and man arising from thence. And, as far as I can find, this is the only way he leaves even for the bulk of all mankind to attain to the knowledge of religion and the whole of their duty. They are attentively to consider the natures and reasons of things; they are to know the being and perfections of God, and the relations between him and us; they are to know themselves, and the relations they bear to one another; they are to consider and compare these several relations, and the fitnesses and obligations arising from

them; and thus are to collect the whole of religion and their duty, every man for himself, from the abstract nature and reason of things, independently of all authority whatsoever, human or divine. But certainly he must know very little of human nature, or the present state of mankind, that can persuade himself that the generality of men are fitted for such abstracted reasoning and inquiries. And one should think our author should be sensible of this, who finds fault with those that extol the 'strength of human reason in matters of religion and morality, under the present corrupt and degenerate state of mankind; and declares that the best systems of morality, drawn up by the greatest moralists that ever lived, without the light of revelation, were intermixed and blended with so much superstition, and so many gross absurdities, as quite eluded and defeated the main design of them. *Mor. Phil.* vol. 1. pp. 154, 155.

The author of 'Christianity as old as the Creation' might consistently enough suppose, that every man is to be left to collect for himself the whole of religion which he is to believe and practice, from the reason and fitness of things, independently of all revelation and all authority whatsoever, either divine or human; because he at the same time supposed, that the reason and fitness of things is obvious to the meanest understanding; that the whole of religion and the law of nature is so clear to all mankind, even to those that cannot read in their mother-tongue, that they naturally understand it, and cannot be mistaken in the principles and duties of it. This scheme is indeed contrary to evident fact and experience. But yet it must be owned to be consistent with itself. But our author, as far as I can understand his intention, adopts his main principle, and is for sending every man to the reason and fitness of things for finding out the whole of religion and his duty; and yet, at the same time, would be thought to acknowledge that in the 'present corrupt state of mankind the law of nature is not written with sufficient strength and clearness on every man's heart,' as that author affirmed; and that even 'the greatest moralists that ever lived,' if left merely to themselves and their own reason, could not furnish out a right scheme of religion and morality. But certainly if this be a just account of the present state of mankind, it cannot reasonably be denied that authority, especially a divine one, may be of very great use in matters of religion and morality. Even with regard to things which, absolutely speaking, are capable of strict demonstration, an extraordinary revelation from God, assuring us of them in his name and by his authority, may be of great use to the bulk of mankind, who are not very capable of following these things through a chain of abstracted reasonings, especially considering how much they are generally under the influence of corrupt passions and prejudices. Much more will this hold with regard to those things which, though they have nothing in them but what is agreeable to reason, yet cannot be proved to be necessarily true by arguments drawn from the nature of the thing; of which kind there are several things which it may be very useful for us to get a certain information of.

Some things there are which appear certain enough in the general, yet when we descend to particulars, there is a great deal of difficulty in them. Of this kind is what the author mentions, 'that it is certain, since God is the wise and righteous Governor of the world, he will reward good men and punish the wicked, as reason and justice require.' This, he thinks, is a more 'certain and infallible manifestation of God to man than any historical proof can amount to.' But whatever may be said as to the certainty of the general principle, that God will 'reward good men and punish the wicked, as reason and justice require,' yet with respect to the particulars comprehended under it, and upon which the use and application of that principle in a great measure depends, e. g. how far, in a consistency with his own wisdom, and justice, and purity, God may think fit to pardon the iniquities we are chargeable with, and to reward an obedience attended with so many failures and defects as ours is in our present imperfect state; what kind of temper and conduct it is that will denominate persons righteous in his sight, and what that righteousness comprehends under it that is necessary to entitle us to a future reward; and who these persons are that shall be accounted wicked, and shall be thereby obnoxious to future punishments; and, finally, the nature, greatness, and duration of the reward that shall be conferred, and the punishments that shall be inflicted. These are things that may occasion great doubts and difficulties to a serious and inquisitive mind. And it cannot reasonably be denied, that an extraordinary revelation, additional to the common light of nature and reason, would be highly useful, in which we might have these things explained and ascertained by an express testimony from God.

Again, with respect to moral obligations resulting from the relations between God and us, and between us and our fellow creatures, though we may have sufficient evidence as to the grounds of those moral obligations in general, (which is all that this author's arguments prove) yet we may be greatly at a loss, if left to ourselves, with regard to the particular laws and duties comprehended under those general rules. There may be duties that appear agreeable to nature and reason, and the relations we stand in, and which yet cannot be proved by arguments, from the nature of the thing, to be necessarily obligatory. There may be such objections brought against them, and with some appearance of reason, as may mightily weaken the force and influence of them; especially if appetite and a little worldly interest be on the other side. But an express revelation from God, enforced by his divine authority, would soon decide the controversy, and give those laws and duties a vast weight, and overrule the contrary pretences. And I may appeal to the common sense of mankind, whether an express revelation from God himself, declaring what is his will, and what it is that he expects and requires of us with regard to the particulars of our duty, would not be a vast advantage, if such a revelation can be had; and whether in this case they would not come far more easily and certainly to the knowledge of their duty, than if they were left to collect it,

every man for himself, merely from the abstract reason and fitness of things.

I shall conclude this chapter with observing, that as this writer is for discarding all authority in matters of religion and morality, so he would endeavour to persuade us that the gospel does so too. That our Saviour and his apostles, especially St. Paul, disclaim all pretence to authority, and place the whole proof in the nature of the doctrines they taught, which was to make its way to the hearts and consciences of men merely by its own force and energy. pp. 23, 24, 33, 41, 42. Our author often affects to talk of the intrinsic evidence of the doctrines of the gospel, and would put it upon the world, as if he was a better friend to Christianity who puts the proof of its doctrines upon their own internal immutable evidence, than others who put the proof upon a divine authority or testimony, confirmed by miracles. But the design of all this, when examined and compared with other parts of his scheme, is plain enough. It is that no regard is to be paid to the authority of Christ as a teacher sent from God; nor are we to believe any thing he delivers upon his testimony as divine. The doctrines and laws of the gospel, taught and delivered by Christ and his apostles, are on a level, in point of authority, with the dictates of those philosophers and moralists that never pretended to any extraordinary revelation. And the people are still left to find out the whole of religion and their duty, from the reason and fitness of things, as they were before. But this is entirely to destroy the peculiar use and advantage of the gospel-revelation, which was, leaving all the proofs from nature and reason, to stand in their full force, to assure men of the great important truths and doctrines of religion, and to urge and enforce the duties and precepts of it upon them by a divine authority and testimony.

When our Saviour speaks of a future judgment, and describes the process of the great day; when he assures men of his own coming to judge the world, and of the resurrection of the dead; when he makes the most express promises and declarations of the pardon of sins, the terms upon which it is to be obtained, of the gracious assistances of the Holy Spirit, and of eternal life to be conferred as the reward of our sincere though imperfect obedience; when he proposes himself as the Saviour of mankind, and urges the most pure and excellent laws, and self-denying precepts, &c. does he urge these things merely by reasoning at large upon them, after the manner of philosophers and moralists, by arguments drawn from the nature of the thing? It is evident, that he assures men of these things, and urges them upon their own consciences in a way of divine authority, as one who spoke in the name and by the authority of God himself, and who was extraordinarily sent by him to instruct mankind; and to whose doctrines and laws they were therefore obliged to pay an entire submission and regard. And to convince the world that he was indeed sent of God, as he professed to be, he wrought the most illustrious miracles, visibly transcending all human power, and appealed to these miracles as the evident

proofs of his divine authority and mission; and at last confirmed all by his own resurrection from the dead, and ascension into heaven. And his apostles, who were commissioned by him to preach his gospel to all nations, and to teach what he commanded them, were also enabled, in his name and in attestation of the gospel, to perform the most wonderful works, bearing all the signatures of an extraordinary divine interposition, for a series of years together. How great soever the excellency of Christianity is in itself, yet it is plain that it was not by the mere force of its own intrinsic evidence that it prevailed. Yea, as the state of mankind then was, sunk in ignorance and vice, idolatry and superstition, its pure and self-denying precepts, its sublime and heavenly doctrines, the spiritual worship it introduced, in opposition to the reigning admired superstitions and pompous rites of their ancestors, and to the darling vices, passions, and prejudices of mankind, would have proved a great hindrance to men's receiving it. And he must certainly know little of mankind, that can suppose that such a religion as this, propagated and preached by a few poor fishermen and a tent maker, and urged in the name of a person that had been ignominiously crucified by his own nation, should be able to make its way, and establish itself in a wicked, an ignorant, and idolatrous world merely by the force of reason; when it had the power of the magistrates, the interests and artifices of the priests, the eloquence of the orators, the learning of the philosophers, the prejudices of the vulgar, the darling opinions and passions of mankind engaged against it; and had no worldly advantages on its side; but exposed its followers to contempt, obloquy, and reproach, to the most grievous sufferings and persecutions, and even to death itself. That which chiefly rendered Christianity victorious at its first publication, and made way for its reception in the world, was the manifest proofs of an extraordinary interposition from heaven, and a divine power and authority attending it and its first publishers; whereby their hearers were convinced that they were indeed extraordinarily sent of God, and that Jesus Christ was what he professed himself to be, the great appointed teacher and Saviour of mankind, of which God had given assurance, as by the many illustrious and supernatural works he performed, so especially by raising him from the dead.

I doubt not our author will be ready to charge me here, as he has already done, with 'rejecting the internal rational evidence of the doctrines as appearing to the understanding,' p. 51 or 52. But I am far from rejecting or undervaluing any internal rational evidence that can be brought for any of the doctrines of Christianity. These are left in their full strength, and have the additional attestation and enforcement of a divine authority or testimony. I am persuaded that none of the doctrines of the gospel can be proved to be contrary to any clear principles of right reason; and that they are all of an excellent tendency. But their being agreeable to reason, or having a good tendency, will not alone prove them to be true. Thus. e. g. when St. Paul, whom this au-

thor represents as placing the whole stress not upon any external proofs, but solely upon the intrinsic evidence of the doctrines themselves, when he declares in that excellent passage, 1 Thess. iv. 14—17, that those that sleep, or die ‘in Jesus, will God bring with him; that the Lord Jesus will descend from heaven,’ &c. and the dead in Christ shall rise first; and that those that remain, and are alive, ‘shall be caught up together in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall be for ever with the Lord:’ And when in the 15th chapter of his first epistle to the Corinthians, he gives such an excellent account of the resurrection of the dead, and of the glorious change that shall be made upon the bodies of good men at Christ’s second coming, and that in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye; this must be owned to be an admirable doctrine; it has something in it very noble, and full of comfort. But nobody will say, that there is any proof of it from the nature of the thing that makes it necessarily true. It may pass for a fine speculation, but cannot engage or determine the assent of the mind merely by its own intrinsic evidence. But if it comes confirmed by a divine testimony or authority, if I consider it as received by extraordinary revelation from God himself, then I regard what before I might wish to be true, as most certainly true, and to be depended on as such.

But our pretended moral philosopher is for depriving us of this advantage. He sometimes affects to extol the great usefulness of the Christian revelation, for bringing men to a certainty, as to several things of importance, as to which they were uncertain before. But, at the same time, he is for utterly depriving it of its proper authority, as an extraordinary revelation from God. Whatsoever, therefore, was uncertain to the reason of mankind before is so still, since the testimony of this revelation can give no additional weight to it at all. Its heavenly doctrines are of no more force than the speculations of philosophers. Its divine promises are stripped of that which gives them their greatest weight and comfort to the minds of good men, i. e. the word and testimony of God himself. Its glorious hopes are greatly weakened, and amount to little more than some pleasing conjectures, which may amuse, but cannot yield a satisfying certainty. The force of its divine laws, and its powerful and amazing sanctions, are in a great measure defeated, and must very much lose their influence upon mankind, when instead of being regarded, as bound upon us by the express authority and testimony of God, they are regarded as having no greater authority than those proposed by Plato, or any other philosopher, and which men will be apt to slight, and think themselves at liberty to reject, when appetite or interest stands in the way. And this may help us to judge what obligations the world is under to this writer, and of what mighty benefit the scheme he proposes must needs be to mankind.

CHAPTER II.

The question concerning the proper proofs of truth, as coming from God, stated. The author's ambiguities detected. Our not being able to explain the particular manner of extraordinary revelation, or immediate inspiration, no objection against the reality of it. Things originally received in a way of extraordinary revelation from God, capable of being communicated to others, to whom the revelation was not immediately made. Exceptions against this considered and obviated. In what sense miracles may be proofs and evidences of the Divine authority of persons or doctrines. The true notion of miracles, explained. The propositions the author lays down relating to them, examined. His objections against the proof of doctrines from miracles, shown to be vain and inconclusive.

HAVING considered the general principles of our author's book, and which he repeats and refers to on all occasions, and particularly his attempt to show that no authority can be of any use, or is at all to be depended on in matters of religion; and having shown that a revelation by a divine authority or testimony, would be of great advantage in the present state of mankind; it is now natural to inquire what are the proper proofs whereby we may come to know that such a revelation is really given, and that it may be justly received as coming from God, and as of divine authority. For if we have no way of proving that such an extraordinary revelation was ever given, it is the same thing to us as if no such revelation had been really given, since we cannot in that case depend upon its authority, either with regard to the doctrines to be believed, or the duties to be practised. But we are just left to ourselves, as much as if there was no such revelation at all. Accordingly this is the point the moral philosopher appeared to me to labour in his book; and I therefore took it, that the question between us, related to the proofs or evidences of truth as coming from God in a way of extraordinary revelation. And this was what I considered in my first chapter. But now I am corrected by this writer for supposing that in this debate, by truth as coming from God, is to be understood that which comes in a way of extraordinary supernatural revelation. It seems it might be for my purpose to understand it so, but it is not for his, see p. 12, that is, it is not for his purpose to keep close to the point at all, but to be perpetually shifting and doubling, and perplexing the question by the ambiguous senses of the word revelation, and truth as coming from God. By revelation he can sometimes seem to understand what others mean by it, that which comes in an extraordinary supernatural way; and, at other times, intends no more by it than any discovery of truth to the human mind, though it be made in the ordinary and natural use of men's own faculties. In like manner, by truth as 'coming from God,' it seems he in-

tends any truth that hath its original from God in any way whatsoever. And, he supposes, I will not deny, that 'all truth is from God as the only true original fountain and conveyer of it, p. 44.* But then he ought to consider, that in this sense, truth, 'as coming from God,' cannot be the appropriated distinguishing character of what he calls moral truth, which, yet, he every where supposes; for he all along mentions 'moral or divine truth,' and truth as coming from God, as terms of the same signification. But, according to that general notion of truth as coming from God, which he advances in the passage now mentioned, mathematical and metaphysical truth, all the truths of natural philosophy may be as properly called divine truth, and be as justly said to come from God as what he calls moral truth. But the proper question between us is not concerning the evidences we may have of the truth of any thing which we know by a natural and rational proof in the ordinary exercise of our faculties; but it is really this, whether there can be any proofs or evidences given of truths coming from God in a way of extraordinary supernatural revelation; and what those proofs and evidences are.

* It is pleasant enough to hear this writer complaining of me for using the words 'Divine truth, truth coming from God, inspiration, revelation, &c. in a loose declamatory way, without ever affixing any clear determinate ideas to them,' p. 83. And again, p. 219, that I use these words in a general, loose, and undefined sense. Whereas the charge lies properly against himself. I take these words in one and the same sense throughout my book, the sense in which they are commonly understood in this controversy, as signifying that which comes from God in an extraordinary supernatural way. But he uses these words in a loose, general, and indeterminate sense, as taking in all truth whatsoever, whether it comes in a natural or supernatural way, in the ordinary exercise of our faculties, or by immediate illumination. And because, in the question between us, I am not for taking truth as coming from God in the same loose and general sense that he does, he thinks fit to represent me as ascribing nothing to God at all, but what is supernatural and extraordinary. He very pertinently observes, p. 82, that 'all things come from God, evil as well as good, punishments as well as mercies; and that all great events, and all extraordinary degrees of wisdom and knowledge, especially in spiritual matters, may be more especially ascribed to him.' And, as if I denied all this, he very gravely complains, that 'it is impossible for him to please me; for he sees I am resolved never to suffer him to have any thing from God, but that he hopes God will be more merciful to him, if he ascribes every thing to him, and owns himself to be his creature, subject, and absolute dependent. For my part, I will be no hinderance to his pious resolutions, and should be very glad that he gave the world more convincing proofs than he has done in this book, of his ascribing any knowledge or abilities he has to God, by employing them in his service, and in promoting the valuable interests of truth and religion. I am very willing he should ascribe every thing to God but his faults, his falsehoods, and misrepresentations. These I would have him take the credit and merit of wholly to himself. And in this very passage, where he expresses himself so piously disposed, he does not deal very fairly by me. For he would fain have the reader believe, that I will not allow that any thing can be said to come from God at all, except it comes in a supernatural way. And particularly he observes, speaking of me, 'This author cannot admit any truth to be divine, or to come from God, unless it comes from him immediately by inspiration or revelation,' p. 83, that is, because I say, the proper question between him and me, is not about that which comes from God in a natural way, and in the ordinary use of our faculties, but about that which comes in a way of supernatural extraordinary revelation, therefore I acknowledge no truth at all to come from God in a natural way. This is our author's excellent reasoning, and his candid way of representing the sense of his adversaries. Though it must be owned, he is a little kinder to me, p. 44, where he allows, that I never have denied, and he supposes, 'I never will, that all truth is from God, as the only true original fountain and conveyer of it.'

And, with regard to this, I proposed two questions to be distinctly considered. The one is, whether those, to whom the original revelation is immediately made, may have a sufficient certainty that what they receive by immediate inspiration is, indeed, a revelation from God. The other is, whether other persons, besides those to whom the original revelation was made, may have a sufficient ground of reasonable assurance, that what those persons published to the world, as by revelation from God, is indeed a revelation from God, and is, therefore, to be received and submitted to as such. Our moral philosopher owns, that these are 'two very important questions,' and he promises 'to attend to my reasonings upon them the more carefully, because the whole controversy between him and me, must, in a manner, depend upon it, p. 14. With regard to the first question, I laid it down as a proposition that cannot reasonably be denied, 'that God can communicate the knowledge of things, by immediate revelation or inspiration, in such a manner, that the person or persons, to whom such a revelation is immediately made, may be certain that it is, indeed, a revelation from God.' This I endeavoured to prove and illustrate, p. 7, &c. Nor does our author himself pretend to deny it. He says he agrees with me, 'that God may immediately and directly, if he pleases, communicate his mind and will, concerning our duty and happiness, to any man or number of men, and enable them to communicate the same to others upon sufficient grounds of belief,' p. 15. And, elsewhere, he says, the question between him and me is not, 'whether God may reveal or discover truth to the mind in a way superior to what is common and natural; for this he allows,' p. 44. He grants that 'God may communicate and convey spiritual and divine truth, either mediately or immediately, as he thinks fit; either by the superior strength and extent of men's own natural faculties, or by any more immediate supernatural illumination,' pp. 25, 45. From these and other passages that might be mentioned both in his former book and in this, it appears, that he himself allows, that immediate inspiration, or supernatural illumination, is one way by which God can communicate his will concerning truth and duty to the human mind; and, no doubt, he would cry out upon me as egregiously misrepresenting him, if I accused him as denying this. And if it be, as he himself expresses it, supernatural, it cannot be expected that we should be able distinctly to explain the manner in which it is communicated. And yet this gentleman is pleased frequently to urge it as a mighty objection, that I do not explain the manner of this inspiration. He charges me with 'talking of inspiration absolutely in the dark,' and that 'I no more convey any idea of it than one could to a blind man of light and colours,' p. 82. And that 'I cannot tell what I mean by any such supernatural or superrational light,' p. 227. But if he be sincere in the acknowledgments he makes, that God may, if he thinks fit, communicate his will to the mind, by 'immediate inspiration or supernatural illumination, he must also acknowledge that it is no objection against the reality of it, that we are not able distinctly to ex-

plain, or account for the way in which he doth it. He cannot but be sensible, if he hath carried his inquiries in these matters as far as he would be thought to have done, that we are very little able to explain the operations of our own minds, or in what manner ideas and notions are impressed and produced there, even in the natural way. And if no more of these things must be accounted certain than we can distinctly explain the manner how they are done, we must be uncertain of our own sensations. If, therefore, there can be any satisfying evidence, that God doth communicate himself to the mind in a way of immediate inspiration, or supernatural revelation, this is sufficient, whether we can explain the manner of it or no. And of this the person, immediately thus inspired or illuminated, may have an absolute certainty, as I have shown in my former book, pp. 7, 8. Nor does the author himself pretend to contest it. And this is all that properly belongs to the first question proposed; for what assurance others may have concerning it, will come to be considered afterwards.

But here it may be proper to observe, that this writer, after having granted, pp. 13, 14, that 'God may communicate his will concerning our duty and happiness, immediately and directly, if he thinks fit,' viz. as he elsewhere expresses it, by 'immediate inspiration, or supernatural illumination;' yet when he comes, p. 18, to treat of inspiration, or immediate revelation, as a way of communicating truth distinct from the natural way, he represents it as the invention of our spiritual scholastics, or systematical divines. And there are two things he observes concerning it. First, that it extends only to things which, as he expresses it, are 'above and beyond the investigation, search, perception, or judgment of natural reason.' And secondly, that the persons that have any such things communicated to them, by immediate inspiration or revelation, cannot possibly communicate them to others; nor can any man understand them without a personal inspiration, or supernatural illumination.

With regard to the first of these, he plainly abuses those he calls the systematical divines, when he represents them as confining inspiration or immediate revelation wholly to things which are absolutely beyond the investigation or perception of human reason. For, as I have already observed, all that hold the Scriptures to be written by inspiration of God, do and must maintain, that that revelation extends to the great principles and duties of natural religion, as there farther established and confirmed. And that this is one great use and advantage of divine revelation, that it gives us a clearer and more satisfying knowledge and certainty even of those things, which, absolutely speaking, are discoverable by human reason. It will, indeed, be easily granted that this revelation doth also extend to things which we could not have discovered by human reason, if they had not been thus extraordinarily revealed: but when once they are thus revealed, they are as capable of being communicated as any other truths. Propositions, relating to them, may be communicated in word or writing, and may be

understood by us, as far as it is necessary for us to understand them, as well as any other propositions. Nor would it alter the case, though the subject, to which those propositions relate, taken in its full extent, may exceed our comprehension; for, notwithstanding this, those propositions may be both intelligible and useful. So it is with regard even to some of the principles in natural religion; e. gr. those relating to the divine eternity, immensity, &c. There may be propositions relating to those things which may be of considerable use, and are capable of being understood and communicated, though the subject in its full extent, is beyond the reach of our faculties, and may be attended with difficulties which we are not able to explain.

But let us see what this writer offers to show that these things cannot be communicated. He begins with telling us, that besides 'scientific truth, and truth in fact, our spiritual scholastics, or systematical divines, have found out a third class or set of communicable truths, which are neither scientific nor historical, and which cannot be derived either from our reason or senses; and this they call inspiration or immediate revelation,' p. 18. But here he expresses himself with great impropriety, and ought not to put this, which is his own blunder, upon the scholastic divines and systematical men. None of them ever said, that this 'set of truths is inspiration, or immediate revelation;' but that these truths came originally by inspiration, or immediate revelation. He then goes on to observe, that 'some have asserted the necessity of a personal immediate inspiration, or supernatural spiritual illumination of every man, in order to perceive and judge of these doctrines and truths of immediate revelation.' And these, he says, 'have been consistent with themselves, and proceeded upon the only supposition, that can render their principles so much as intelligible,' p. 19. He acknowledges, that others, who would seem more rational, say, 'that though the doctrines and truths of pure revelation could not have been known at first, but by an immediate inspiration or revelation from God; yet, when once they are thus discovered and made known, the common reason of man may so far perceive and judge of them, as to have sufficient grounds for receiving and believing them, as coming from God, and depending on divine authority,' p. 20. 'This,' he owns, 'may look plausible, and is the common way of getting off;' but he pronounces, that these 'compounding gentlemen,' as he calls them, 'have been most of all mistaken, and, by halving and mincing the matter, have left themselves no solid ground or footing at all,' p. 20. This is dictated with a very decisive air, after our author's manner. But let us see how he proves it. He asks, 'what this supposed divine authority, by which we must judge of the will of God concerning our duty, is founded upon?' I answer, that the divine authority of doctrines and laws, supposed to have been originally communicated by immediate inspiration or extraordinary revelation from God, I say, their authority, with regard to us, is founded on the proofs we have, that the persons, by whom they were first published, were

indeed extraordinarily sent of God, and had them by revelation from God himself; and if proofs are given sufficient to produce a reasonable assurance of this, which will come to be considered under the second question, then we may, upon good grounds, receive those doctrines and laws as the doctrines and laws of God, or as doctrines and laws that came originally by extraordinary revelation from him; and, consequently, must receive them as of divine authority. The author, next, has recourse to his great principle, that it is plain, that 'truth, in its own nature and the reason of things, is prior to all authority; and, therefore, cannot depend upon it, or be proved by it,' p. 20. And he has this over again in the next page. But the absurdity of this hath been sufficiently shown. And, if this principle were just, it would prove, that even immediate personal inspiration can give no more assurance, in point of authority, than if it came in any other way; which, yet, this writer seems here to allow.

There is another argument he offers to show, that the doctrines, had originally by immediate revelation, cannot be communicated. 'It is certain,' says he, 'that inspiration or revelation cannot be the object of our senses, since no man has seen God at any time, or heard his voice; and it is allowed not to be a matter of science, or communicable by any natural relation and rational connexion of ideas, as this would make a part of natural religion; and, therefore, cannot be known or communicated at all, but by a personal inspiration or supernatural illumination.' And then he adds, that the 'certainty or communicability of immediate inspiration, or revelation above reason, could never have been thought of, or found out, but by great necessity, the mother of invention,' pp. 21, 22. But, here again, he confounds, as he had done in his entering on this argument, p. 18, 'personal inspiration, or immediate revelation,' with the truths, the doctrines, and laws, that came originally by inspiration; and upon this blunder of his own the force of his argument depends. But though the original, immediate, personal inspiration itself is not communicable, as being a personal thing, yet the truths or doctrines, that came originally by inspiration, are communicable, if those doctrines can be expressed in human language, or conveyed by word or writing. And such are the doctrines and laws contained in the Scriptures, which are actually transmitted to us in writing. And as to any truths, that cannot be expressed in word or writing, we shall have no controversy with him about them. And if the person that had those doctrines and laws, by immediate inspiration or revelation from God, can communicate them to others by word or writing, and, at the same time, those, to whom they are communicated, may have sufficient proofs, that the persons, by whom they were originally delivered to the world, had them by inspiration or revelation from God, this lays a just and sufficient foundation for believing those doctrines, and submitting to those laws, as of divine authority.

This, therefore, leads to the second question, with regard to which I had laid down this proposition, 'That there may be such

proofs and evidences given, that persons professing to have received doctrines and laws by revelation from God, for the use of mankind, were, indeed, sent and inspired by him, and did receive them by revelation from him: such proofs and evidences as make it reasonable for those to whom they are made known, to receive such laws and doctrines as of divine authority.' And here I particularly observed, that miracles may be so circumstanced as to be sufficient proofs of the divine mission of those persons, and of the certainty and divine original of those doctrines in attestation of which they were wrought. This is what our author proposes to consider, from p. 25 to the end of his first section. But before I come directly to examine what he offers, I shall state the point in what sense I make miracles to be the proofs or evidences of the divine authority of persons or doctrines; because this writer seems greatly to have mistaken or misrepresented it. He saith, speaking of me, p. 30, 'This author grounds the whole of revealed religion upon the evidence of miracles, as a proof of divine authority, abstracted from, or independent of any reason or fitness of things, as appearing to the understanding by a rational connexion of ideas. This is plainly the author's grand principle, and what he has made himself accountable for; or, otherwise, he would not contradict me.' And he all along represents it, as if, because I made miracles proper proofs of divine revelation, therefore I entirely renounced all consideration of the reasonableness and fitness of the thing itself, and could not consistently ever urge this at all, as of any use or weight in judging of a divine revelation, or inquiring into its evidence. And, accordingly, because in my second chapter I offer several considerations to show the 'intrinsic wisdom, goodness, and rational design of the law of Moses, and the fitness of the ritual and ceremonial part of that policy to the circumstances of that people,' he represents this as 'entirely overthrowing and giving up the argument of my first chapter, concerning divine authority, as proved by miracles, being the only proper and genuine evidences of divine truth, or a revelation from God,' p. 54. But this is far from being a just representation of my sentiments.

In the passage, cited by this author, I observed that 'the reasonableness of a doctrine or law will never alone prove, that the man who teacheth that doctrine, or bringeth that law, had it by immediate revelation from God.' See 'Divine Authority,' p. 47, where it is plain, that I do not say, that the reasonableness of the doctrines and laws must not be considered at all, or that it is of no use to consider it; but that such reasonableness will never alone prove that the man who teacheth that doctrine or bringeth that law had it by immediate extraordinary revelation from God. Accordingly, in the case there put, I make a supposition of a person's professing to have received doctrines and laws by revelation from God, &c. and mention, among other things, the apparent probity and sincerity of the person's own conduct, and the good tendency of the doctrines and laws he teacheth; and add, that 'this may form a strong prejudice in his favour, but doth not alone prove that

he received those doctrines and laws by revelation (that is, by extraordinary supernatural revelation) from God himself.' See 'Divine Authority,' p. 16. And again, in p. 41, in mentioning the grounds upon which religion may be received as of divine authority, I suppose these grounds were, 'besides the good tendency of its doctrines and laws, the illustrious miraculous attestations whereby it was confirmed.'

From these passages it is evident, that though I deny that the reasonableness of doctrines and laws will alone prove that the man that bringeth those doctrines had them by immediate extraordinary revelation, yet I do not deny but that it may be very useful to consider the reasonableness and good tendency of those doctrines and laws; and this may be of great weight to give the proof from miracles a greater force, and set them in a stronger light.* For when there is a body of doctrines or laws published to the world, by persons professing to be extraordinarily sent of God, the main design of which is to promote the practice of true piety and virtue; and they are enabled, in confirmation of it, to perform the most glorious miracles, visibly transcending all human power; this good tendency of those doctrines and laws furnishes a strong additional proof that those miracles could not be wrought by evil beings; and, consequently, if they are above all the power of man, must be wrought by the immediate power of God himself; or by good beings superior to man, acting according to his direction, and must, therefore, be regarded as yielding a divine attestation to the certainty and divine original of those doctrines and laws. And such a divine attestation or authority would (as I have already shown) be of very great advantage to give men a more satisfying assurance even of those things, which, however agreeable to right reason, are encumbered with much darkness and prejudice in the present state of mankind, and would give a mighty force and efficacy to laws, which, however good in themselves, might appear contrary to our inclinations and appetites, and liable to objections. Nor would it at all diminish the force of the proof given by miracles to that revelation, if, among those laws, there should be some of a positive nature; and, among the doctrines there taught, there should be some relating to things, which, depending on the free counsels of God, we could not have known or discovered, if they had not been thus revealed to us! though, when they are revealed, they are also of a good tendency, and may be very useful to us. For some things of this kind may justly be expected in a revelation from God to mankind; and when confirmed by a divine attestation, may very properly be received upon that authority; though, without it, we could not have necessarily proved them to be true and divine, by arguments drawn from the nature and reason of the thing.

Having offered this to obviate the author's misrepresentations,

* Accordingly I actually make this use of it in the case of the Christian revelation. See 'Divine Authority,' &c. p. 13.

and to state the design of the present question, I shall now proceed to consider the attempt he makes to show, that miracles can, in no case, be sufficient proofs of the extraordinary divine mission of any person, or of the certainty and divine original of any doctrines.

And here I had observed, that the question doth not properly proceed 'concerning all miracles in general, whether all kinds of miracles are proofs of doctrines as coming from God; but whether miracles may not be of such a nature, and so circumstanced for number, grandeur, and continuance, as to yield a sufficient attestation to the divine mission of the persons, in favour of whom, and to the divine original of the doctrines, in confirmation of which they are wrought; and, particularly, whether the miracles, wrought in confirmation of the Mosaic and Christian dispensations, were not such.

In order, therefore, to invalidate this, he ought to prove, either that no miracles can at all in any case be of such a nature, and so circumstanced, as to yield a sufficient attestation to the divine mission of persons, or to the certainty and divine original of doctrines and laws; or he ought to show, that the miracles, wrought in attestation of the Mosaic and Christian dispensations, were not such. And, accordingly, he has made some attempt as to both these.

With regard to the general question he hath said very little but what is sufficiently obviated, either in my former book, or in Mr. Chapman's learned performance, who hath considered the question about miracles very fully; though this writer, according to his laudable manner, pretends to answer it without almost taking any notice of what he hath advanced.

He observes, p. 49, that I ought to have given some certain notion or idea, or other, of a miracle; at least, as the matter stands in my apprehension.' Mr. Chapman has given a definition of a miracle, but neither does this satisfy him; for he declares Lett. to Eusebius, p. 29, 30. That after all the pains Eusebius has taken, about the definition of a miracle, he is still as much at a loss as ever how to judge of a miracle; and that, in his opinion, we do not so much want the definition of a miracle, as some certain rule or criterion of judgment concerning it. Thus I find it is a very hard thing to content this writer, whether with a definition of a miracle or without it. But though I did not give a formal definition of a miracle, yet, I think, I have said enough to give a certain idea of what I understand by miracles in this controversy.

It appears from the account I give of miracles in my first book, pp. 10, 11, that I supposed the following conditions to concur in them, which, when they all concur, yield a sufficient and convincing attestation to the divine mission of persons, and authority of doctrines.

1st. That they must be works of such 'a nature as manifestly and undeniably transcend all the power and skill of any man, or all the men upon earth; and, therefore, evidently argue a supernatural interposition. For though we do not know the utmost power of all

other beings, yet many instances may be supposed, in which we may safely pronounce, that such or such effects are above all the skill or power of man; and that, therefore, they must be necessarily owing to the interposition of a superior agent or agents.

2dly. It carries this still higher, if it be supposed that they are such 'amazing and extraordinary acts of power and dominion, as naturally, and almost unavoidably, lead us to regard them as proceeding from the supreme Lord and Governor of mankind.' For whatever we may suppose the power of any inferior created beings to be, yet since they are all under his sovereign control, since he, and he alone, is the Governor as he was the Maker of the world, and since it is of high importance to mankind that he should maintain a visible character of dignity and superiority in his works, above the competition of all other beings whatsoever, it may reasonably be supposed, that there are some works which God reserves in his own hands, or which he will never suffer to be done, but under his especial direction and influence; at least, never by any evil beings, engaged in an opposition to the interests of his kingdom. Instances of this kind are mentioned by Mr. Chapin. See Euseb. pp. 96, 116. And such, manifestly, are several of the miracles, recorded to have been wrought by Moses and our Lord Jesus Christ, which carry such glorious indications of a divine power and dominion, that it is scarce possible to help regarding them, as done by the Lord of nature, and under his own direction and special influence.

3dly. It adds great force to this, if there be a succession or 'concurrence of many such amazing and extraordinary acts of power and dominion,' and that for a series of years together, all manifestly tending to the same end. For if such things were done 'merely in a single instance or two, let the fact be ever so extraordinary, and above all the power of man, yet it might be suspected that it was only some strange thing that had happened,' from which nothing could be certainly concluded. And such also were the miracles of Moses and Jesus Christ. The evidence was not put upon a single miracle or two, however extraordinary and glorious, but there was a wonderful series and succession of unparalleled acts and supernatural attestations.

4thly. Another condition I mentioned is this, that they should be all plainly wrought in attestation and evidence of the divine mission of the person by whom, or in favour of whom, they are wrought, and in 'confirmation of the scheme of doctrines and laws,' by him published to the world, in the name of God. And accordingly, we find that Moses put the proof of his being extraordinarily sent of God, and of the divine original and authority of the laws he delivered in his name, upon those illustrious miracles, which he was enabled to perform in the name and by the power of God. And in like manner the miracles wrought by Jesus Christ, and his apostles and disciples after him, had evidently this as the main view to which they were all directed, viz. to confirm the divine mission of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the truth and divine authority of the doctrines and laws which he introduced.

5thly. It is farther required, that they should never be 'controlled or overruled by any superior miracles, or contrary evidence.'

Perhaps something short of all this might in many cases be sufficient; but where all these things concur, they may be justly regarded as yielding a divine testimony to those doctrines and laws, in attestation of which they are wrought. And it cannot reasonably be reconciled to the notion of an infinitely wise and good Mind, presiding over the affairs of men, to suppose that they ever should be suffered to be wrought in attestation of an imposture. I have already shown, that a revelation, confirmed by the authority and testimony of God himself, would be of vast use to mankind in matters of religion in their present state, both to assure them of doctrines, which however useful, they could not have known, or not so certainly, without it; and to give a greater force to laws; and urge their duty more strongly upon them in its just extent. Now it is scarce to be conceived what greater proof could be given to mankind of the divine authority of such a revelation, than such a series of extraordinary miraculous works wrought in attestation of it. One way of God's discovering himself to mankind is by his works. And as his ordinary standing works exhibit the glorious displays of his eternal power and Godhead, which should lead men to acknowledge and adore him, and will leave them without excuse if they do not do it; so, supposing that God designed to make extraordinary discoveries of his will, in a way of special revelation, a series of extraordinary miraculous works, that argue a dominion over nature and its established laws, wrought in attestation of that revelation, seem to be peculiarly fitted for engaging mankind to receive and submit to that revelation, as of divine authority. This is a way of God's giving his testimony, and showing his interposition, the most powerful and striking that can be, and which comes with a force which human nature is scarce able to resist. And those, that on the evidence of such a series of wonderful works as I have been supposing, receive doctrines and laws as coming from God, act a wise and reasonable part, and show a becoming veneration and regard to the Supreme being, and a due submission to the discoveries of his will.

Let us now see what our author offers to show, that no miracles can be proofs of the divine mission of persons, or the divine original and authority of doctrines.

He lays down some general observations concerning miracles, p. 30, &c. to be afterwards applied; though when he should come distinctly to apply them to the miracles of Moses, and of Jesus Christ, he leaves the reader to himself to apply them as well as he can. But I shall consider his lemmata, as he calls them, and make some application of them as I go along.

His first observation is this, 'that we have no certain test or rule of judgment, whereby to distinguish between a true miracle and a false one, or between a thing of this nature that is really done, or done only in appearance.' And to strengthen this, he observes,

that the 'senses themselves are liable to deception: and, in cases of this kind, we have the more reason to suspect them, because there have been innumerable stories of supernatural facts which have been generally received and believed, as strongly attested by great numbers of credible eye and ear witnesses, and yet afterwards appeared ill-grounded, and to have been owing to imposture, ignorance, or credulity,' &c. And 'men are the more easily imposed on in such matters, as they love to gratify the passion of admiration.'

This is a very general way of talking, and if it were good for any thing, might be brought to prove, that because persons have been sometimes deceived and imposed upon in facts, therefore no man can ever depend upon the testimony of his senses in any case whatsoever; though our author himself elsewhere speaks of our senses as so certain, 'that they leave no room to doubt of any deception,' p. 18. And, for my part, I cannot help thinking, that if miracles be of such a nature, and so circumstanced, that men may have as much certainty that they were really done, and not in appearance only, as they can have that any other facts whatsoever are really done, here is a certainty sufficient to satisfy any reasonable mind, and it were perfectly absurd and unreasonable to demand more. And such were the miracles that were wrought by Moses, and our Lord Jesus Christ. They were a series of extraordinary facts done in open view, before such numbers of persons, and the reality of which so plainly appeared in the effects, that to say that those that heard and saw them could not be certain that they were really done, is to destroy all certainty whatsoever. And I will undertake to prove, that taking them as they are recorded to have happened, the persons that were witnesses to them had as full proof of their reality as any man can possibly have of any thing for which he has the testimony of all his senses.

His second observation is this, 'that we have no test or rule of human judgment, whereby to know what is, or is not a miracle, supposing a thing to be really done, and that there is no deception in the case with regard to the fact itself.' The reason he gives is this, 'because we know not the utmost power of natural agents, or how far even the most common causes may sometimes concur unobserved by us, which may make a thing look extraordinary, when there is nothing uncommon in it. And from hence how extraordinary and supernatural soever a thing may appear, yet we can scarce ever pronounce with any certainty, concerning a peculiar divine agency, or immediate and occasional divine interposition, p. 31. Now, in opposition to this lemma, I lay down another, and that is, that as miracles may be so circumstanced that we can have all the assurance that they were really done, and not in appearance only, that we can have that any facts whatsoever were really done; so they may be of such a nature, that we may certainly know that they were really miracles; that is, that they were above all the power of any man, or all the men upon earth, and of all natural material causes. And though we are not thoroughly acquainted with all the

secrets of nature, and the powers of natural causes, yet this does not hinder, but that in many cases we may safely and certainly pronounce that such and such effects, e. g. the raising the dead, or restoring a perished limb in an instant, exceed all natural mechanical powers.* And as there may be miraculous works performed, concerning which we may be sufficiently certain, that they exceed the power of man and all natural material causes, so they may be of such a nature, and so circumstanced, that we may be certain, that they were not wrought by superior invisible evil beings, and therefore must be wrought by the immediate power of God himself; or which comes to the same thing in the present question, by the agency of invisible good beings, acting under his special influence and direction. There may be works that carry such illustrious characters of a sovereignty and dominion over nature, that they cannot reasonably be ascribed to any other than to the supreme Lord and Governor of the world, or to his special direction: nor can it, without the greatest absurdity, be supposed, in consistency with his infinite wisdom and goodness, and the glory of his unequalled majesty and dominion, that he should ever suffer them to be wrought in attestation of an imposture, or to promote the interests of vice, and falsehood, and superstition. And I am willing to join issue with this writer when he pleases, and show, that the miracles wrought in attestation of the Mosaical and Christian dispensation were such.

His third lemma or observation, with respect to miracles, is this, that 'where the facts are not the immediate objects of sense, but depend upon testimony, this testimony being human must be always fallible. And in this case the probability will be still less at a greater distance from the fountain, or first original evidence, or as it comes to us through more hands, and in a longer succession of time. For in this case there must be always some danger of alterations in the conveyance; and a few circumstances, either left out or added, might make the most common thing in the world look extraordinary and miraculous.' In opposition to this I lay down this position, that as miracles may be of such a nature, that those that are eye and ear witnesses may be as certain of the reality of them, as any man can be by the testimony of his senses, of any facts whatsoever, so those miracles may be transmitted to others that were not eye and ear witnesses, with such a degree of credibility, that there can be no reasonable ground for doubt of the truth of those facts. And though in this case our belief of them depends upon human testimony, yet human testimony may be so circumstantiated as to give a certain assurance, which no reasonable man can doubt of, concerning that which is conveyed to us by that testimony. And particularly with respect to accounts of facts done in past ages, all the world owns, that they may be transmitted to us with such a degree of evidence, that we can no more reasonably

* The absurdity of the contrary supposition Mr. Chapman has well exposed, Euseb. pp. 82, 83.

doubt of them than if we ourselves had lived in those ages; and any man that should refuse to believe them, and give no other reason for it, but that they come to us by human testimony, and were done several ages ago, would only render himself ridiculous.

His fourth observation is this, that as 'human testimony must be always fallible, so with regard to miracles, prodigies, ghosts, apparitions, and things in themselves improbable, it has the very least and lowest degree of credibility. The same testimony and attestation which would be easily taken for a common natural fact, would not be soon admitted for an extraordinary and miraculous one, where there must be always more danger and probability of deception. And therefore the evidence or proof in this case ought to be so much the stronger and incontestable, in proportion to the natural improbability or incredibility of the thing,' p. 32. But a thing's being extraordinary and miraculous is no objection against the credibility of it, if at the same time it be of such a nature, and so circumstanced, that the persons that were witnesses to it might have as full an assurance of the certainty and reality of it, as any man can possibly have of any facts whatsoever. And of this kind were the miraculous facts that were done in attestation of the Mosaic and Christian dispensation. They were attended with such a degree of evidence as was every way equal to the importance of the facts, and far superior to the evidence brought for many other facts, which yet it would be accounted unreasonable to doubt of. And the accounts of those facts are transmitted to us with a degree of evidence and credibility, that many other accounts of past facts are not transmitted with; which yet, in the judgment of all reasonable persons, may be safely depended on.

His fifth observation is, that 'it is highly improbable, and cannot be admitted, that God should work miracles, or interpose by an immediate divine power out of the way of natural agency and common providence, but to answer some great end of vast importance to mankind. And therefore he would not work miracles, either to prove things which were plainly and necessarily true in nature and reason before, nor things in their own nature indifferent, and such as can serve to no good use or purpose at all, when they are known and put in practice,' p. 33.

It will be easily granted, that if God interposes, by an immediate divine power, out of the way of natural agency, it will be for some worthy end of importance to mankind. And it is a valuable end, and of importance to mankind, to attest a revelation by miracles; one design of which is to confirm and illustrate those great truths and obligations, even of natural religion, which, though founded in nature and reason, yet, by the author's own acknowledgment, were, through the corruption of mankind, in a great measure defaced and obscured; and also to make a discovery of some things, which, though of considerable importance to mankind, were such as they could not have discovered without such a revelation. Nor is it any objection against the usefulness and importance of such a revelation, that it also prescribes some things of a positive nature,

which, though abstractly, and in themselves considered, they are indifferent, yet are designed, in a subserviency to the main ends of all religion, and when observed according to the institution, are really useful.

Our author, in enlarging on this last observation, takes occasion to show, that Christ's miracles were useful to remove the prejudices of the people, and to procure a due attention and regard to his doctrines; though he will not allow them to have yielded any additional proof or attestation to those doctrines. I shall take notice of this afterwards. At present I shall only observe, that if it were an end worthy of God to interpose by such glorious miracles, as this writer pretends to grant, to engage the attention of the people to our Saviour's doctrines, then certainly it must be owned to be an end worthy of God, to exhibit those miracles in order to give an attestation to the truth of those doctrines. And indeed, the one of these as the case was circumstanced, was really inseparable from the other. For if God concerned himself in so extraordinary a manner, by interposing out of the way of natural agency, to procure their attention to those doctrines, this was a proof of his approbation of those doctrines; and consequently was a proof of their being good, and true, and divine. And therefore these miracles must, in reason, not only engage the people to consider what Christ delivered, but be regarded by them as proofs and evidences of his divine mission, and of the truth and divine authority of the doctrines he taught. And accordingly it is evident, that it was in this view that our Saviour himself represented the end and design of his miracles; as I shall have occasion to show.

Our author has little more as to the general question concerning miracles; he thinks 'nothing can be plainer than this, that the bare power of working miracles can be no proof at all, either of the truth of doctrine, or any authority, or special commission, that the persons have from God,' p. 26, and again, p. 49, 'nothing can be plainer than this, that the bare exertion of power, of what nature or kind soever, can have no connexion with truth or goodness; but the ends and purposes to which that power is directed must be considered, and must denominate the persons as good or bad,' &c. This objection is so fully exposed by his learned adversary Mr. Chapman, that he ought not to have repeated it, at least without endeavouring to answer what had been offered against it. See Euseb. pp. 78, 79.

It will be easily allowed, that power and truth are distinct ideas, though inseparably united in God, the great fountain of both; but it doth not follow from thence, that power can in no case be so exerted, as to yield an attestation to truth. For supposing power exerted in such a manner as to bear the evident marks and characters of a divine interposition and agency, and that this power is exerted in confirmation of a body of doctrines and laws pretended to have been received from God, then this power so exerted may be regarded as the testimony of God himself, in favour of those doctrines and laws, and as a proof that they did, indeed, come from God. And

if it shows, that these doctrines came from God. it shows that they are true ; because it is impossible that God should be deceived himself, or be accessory to deceive others, by giving his attestation to a lie.

There is a passage which this author has, pp. 80, 81, which I shall here consider, because it relates to this subject, and the evident design of it is to show, that neither inspiration, nor miracles as a proof of that inspiration, are to be regarded as yielding any attestation to the truth and divinity of doctrines received by inspiration, and confirmed by miracles. He urges, that we are obliged to 'try the spirits, to bring the doctrines themselves to the test of reason and sound judgment, and to consider their nature and tendency, thereby to know whether they came from the spirit of truth and righteousness, or of error and delusion.' And that, 'suppose doctrines to be delivered in the most extraordinary way possible, this extraordinary manner of conveyance could be no proof of those doctrines, which might be error and delusion notwithstanding ; and those doctrines must be judged by the same test and rule, as if they had come to us in the most common and natural way.' And he observes, that if 'an angel from heaven should have delivered any other doctrines, different from those of natural light and purity, they must have been rejected, with what extraordinary miraculous power soever they had been proposed and delivered.'

As far as I can understand the force of his argument, it runs thus ; that because all doctrines are to be brought to the test and judgment of reason, so far that no doctrines must be admitted that are evidently contradictory to the clear principles of sound reason, and subversive of morality, and the eternal rules of righteousness, therefore neither inspiration nor miracles can be depended upon as any proofs of doctrines at all ; nor is any more regard to be had to what comes this way, and is thus attested, than if it had come in the ordinary way. This is a very strange way of reasoning ; nor is it easy to discern the connexion of the conclusion with the premises. But let us suppose doctrines which are not contradictory to the clear principles of reason, or subversive of morality, but yet, which we could not have found out of ourselves by our own reason, and which cannot be proved to be necessarily true by any arguments drawn from the nature of the thing, and that these doctrines are confirmed by numerous uncontrolled miracles : the question is, whether such miracles may not be justly regarded as yielding a divine testimony to those doctrines ? and, whether they may not be reasonably received as of divine authority, on the account of those extraordinary miraculous attestations, though we should not have thought ourselves obliged to receive them without those attestations ? and to this the author's argument here saith nothing at all.

It will be granted, that no doctrines are to be admitted upon any pretence whatsoever that are contrary to the evident light of reason, and which subvert the obligations of morality ; and in this sense it

may be admitted, as our author observes, that 'if the doctrines of Christ himself could not have borne this test of light and purity, they could not have been rationally received.' But then, at the same time, it may also be certainly concluded from the wisdom and goodness of divine providence, that if this had been the case, Christ would never have been enabled to work such illustrious miracles in confirmation of his divine mission, much less would God have raised him from the dead. It can, in no consistency with the divine perfections, be supposed, that God would have given, or suffered to be given, such a series of illustrious attestations, bearing all the marks of divinity, in confirmation of an imposture, and to favour the cause of idolatry, false doctrine, vice, and licentiousness. The apostle Paul, in his epistle to the Galatians, chap. i. 8, puts the case, that if he himself, or 'an angel from heaven,' should preach a different gospel from that which he had preached to them, they were not to regard it. This is only a vehement form of asseveration, to show, that on no pretence whatsoever should they swerve from the gospel they had received from him. But why were they so firmly to adhere to the gospel he had taught them? it was, because it was the gospel he had received 'by revelation from Jesus Christ;' see ver. 12, and which was confirmed by the most illustrious miraculous attestations, and gifts of the Holy Spirit; see chap. iii. 2. 5. So that he is so far from intending by this to insinuate, that inspiration and miracles can be no proof of doctrines, that on the contrary he produces these as manifest and incontestable proofs of the truth and divinity of that gospel, from which they were never under any pretence to depart.

CHAPTER III.

The miracles wrought by Moses vindicated against the author's objections. The case of the Egyptian sorcerers, and their miracles, considered. His attempt to prove that Moses might have been assisted by some supernatural evil power, because his miracles were wrought, not for the good, but for the destruction, of mankind, and were done out of a particular partiality to the Israelites. The nature of those miracles, and the end for which they were wrought, prove they could not be the work of an evil being. The miracles of Jesus Christ vindicated. Not merely wrought to procure attention from the people, but designed as proper proofs and attestations to his divine mission, and the truth and divine authority of his laws and doctrine. The wonderful effects of Christ's miracles not owing to the strength of imagination. The extraordinary miraculous facts wrought in attestation of the Mosaical and Christian dispensation come to us with sufficient evidence to make it reasonable for us to believe the truth of these facts.

HAVING considered what this writer offers on the general question about miracles, I shall now proceed to examine what he hath

concerning the miracles of Moses and our Lord Jesus Christ. I had endeavoured to show, that, supposing those miracles to have been really done as they are represented in Scripture, they were of such a nature, that it cannot reasonably be supposed that they could be done, or that God would have suffered them to be done in attestation of an imposture. See divine authority, p. 19—23. This the author represents as a 'building the whole proof upon a *petitio principii*, and as a taking the miraculous facts, with regard to Moses as well as Christ, for granted.' p. 48. He cannot it seems, or will not, distinguish here between two questions which are of very distinct consideration. The one is, whether, supposing the miracles wrought by Moses and our Lord Jesus Christ to have been really done as represented in Scripture, they might justly be regarded as sufficient credentials of their divine mission, and as sufficient attestations to the truth and divine original of the doctrines and laws they published in the name of God. The other is, what reason we have to believe that those miracles were really wrought as they are represented, and the accounts given of them, may be safely depended upon. It is the former of these that comes properly to be considered in this place. And it highly concerns this author to consider it, because, if this can be proved, the main question is determined against him, viz., That there may be miracles of such a nature, and so circumstanced, as to yield a proper proof and attestation to the divine mission of persons, and authority of doctrines. He is not insensible of this; and therefore, after having made a flourish about the *petitio principii*, as he calls it, he is willing, it seems, to 'give me all possible advantage in the argument, and to suppose the truth of the facts themselves,' and yet denies 'the use I made of it, and the consequences drawn from it:' that is, he denies, that supposing the facts were true, they could furnish a sufficient proof of the divine mission of those by whom these miracles were performed, and sufficient attestations to the truth and divine original of those doctrines and laws, in confirmation of which they were wrought. One would have expected here, that he would have undertaken to prove this from the nature or circumstances of those miracles; but nothing of this appears in this place, where it might naturally be expected; nothing but a repeating what he had said on the general question, that the intrinsic excellency of the doctrines themselves is the only possible proof, and that no miracles can be a proof. But as there are several hints loosely scattered after the author's manner in several parts of his book, particularly in his first section, to show that neither the miracles of Moses, nor those of Christ, taken as represented in Scripture, were proper proofs or attestations to their divine mission, or to the divine authority of the doctrines and laws they published in the name of God, I shall draw them together, and distinctly consider them.

And, first, I shall begin with what he saith concerning the miracles of Moses.

One objection, which he repeats again and again, is drawn from the miracles wrought by the Egyptian sorcerers. He observes, that

nothing can be plainer than this, that the bare power of working miracles is no proof at all, either of the truth of doctrines, or any authority, or special commission, that the persons have from God. The Egyptian sorcerers, if the accounts be true, wrought great miracles; and they who could create a living creature, and turn a rod into a serpent, might as well have made a world, raised the dead, or done any thing else within the compass of power. It can signify nothing, to say that these sorcerers only wrought false or counterfeit miracles, but the miracles wrought by Moses were true and real; since nothing appears from the story itself, but that the miracles were of the same kind, and equally true on both sides. And though Moses wrought greater miracles than they, this can only prove his greater power or skill; and that the magicians were fairly out-done in their own way. But it can no more prove any commission or divine authority of Moses, than if he had conquered them by force of arms,' &c. pp. 26, 27.

In examining this passage, I shall first consider of what kind the miracles were, that were wrought by the Egyptian sorcerers, and then I shall inquire into the justice of the inference drawn from it; whether it follows, that because they wrought such miracles, therefore the miracles wrought by Moses could not 'prove any commission or divine authority of Moses.'

With regard to the Egyptian sorcerers, he observes, that 'if the accounts be true, they wrought great miracles. And they who could create a living creature, and turn a rod into a serpent, might as well have made a world, raised the dead, or done any thing else within the compass of power.' And I must own, that though I will not carry it so far as to say with this author, that the turning a rod into a living creature would have been as great an exertion of power as creating a world, yet it would have argued so great a power, that I think, no created being, much less an evil one, can be reasonably supposed to have really done it. I am therefore persuaded that it was done only in appearance. It may reasonably be conceived, that supposing evil spirits to have been concerned, they might easily have snatched away the magicians' rods, and have substituted serpents in the room of them, of which there were enough to be had in or about Egypt. And that they might do this by so quick and slight a conveyance, as not to be observed by the spectators, as jugglers often perform their tricks. But to this the author objects, that 'it signifies nothing to say, that these sorcerers wrought false or counterfeit miracles, but the miracles wrought by Moses were true and real; since nothing appears from the story itself, but that the miracles were of the same kind, and equally true on both sides.' To which I answer, that supposing the miracles of the magicians were wrought in appearance only in the manner now described, not by a real conversion of a rod into a serpent, but by a quick and dexterous substitution of a serpent instead of a rod; and that in Moses's case there was a real conversion of a serpent into a rod; yet it was proper, in relating the story, to relate the fact as it appeared to the spectators. If it had been

said in the story itself, that Moses really turned his rod into a serpent, but the magicians did not really turn their rods into serpents, but only appeared to do so ; this might, and no doubt would have been, objected against as a manifest proof of the great partiality in the historian. The spectators thought their rods, as well as that of Moses, were turned into serpents, and it was proper to relate the matter as it appeared to them. But it may further be urged, why may it not then be supposed, that Moses also wrought his miracles in appearance only, by some slight of art and cunning, or by the agency and confederacy of evil spirits, and therefore was only a greater magician than they were? I answer, this might possibly have been suspected, if Moses had wrought only such miracles as the magicians seemed to work as well as he. It might, in that case have been imagined, that there was some trick in it, though the spectators could not find it out ; or that it was only some strange unaccountable thing that had happened, from which no inference could be drawn in proof of his divine mission. But the amazing succession of wonders that followed, put it beyond all reasonable doubt, that his miracles were real, and incomparably grand, exceeding the power of any creature. And many of them were of such a nature, that by the reality and greatness of their effects, left no room for supposing or suspecting an imposture. If it be said, If the magicians imitated some of Moses's miracles so well, why might they not imitate others of his miracles too in the same way ; e. g. why might they not pretend as he did, to turn the dust into lice, and to have managed this as they did in the other case, by a conveyance, of lice into the place of the dust ; which would have been no very difficult matter, supposing the assistance of invisible agents? I answer, that I doubt not, they might have imitated that as well as they had done some of the former miracles, if they had been permitted to do so ; but Providence would not suffer them, or the evil spirits that assisted them, to go so far as to imitate the other miracles of Moses even in appearance ; but ordered it so, that there was an entire triumph over them ; and they themselves were forced to acknowledge that Moses's miracles were real, and owing to the power of God. And their being thus stopped and hindered from going any farther, even in a matter that seemed not to be more difficult than the other wonders they appeared to perform, might give the people just ground to conclude, that all their feats before were owing to delusion and imposture, and that they had not really effected what they had seemed to do.*

* It must be observed, that even with respect to some of the miracles in which the magicians seemed to imitate Moses, he still preserved a manifest superiority, and the miracles, as performed by him, left no reasonable room for suspicion of a juggle or imposture, though theirs justly might. e. g. The magicians pretended to imitate the miracle of Moses in turning water into blood, and in bringing frogs upon the land. But there was evidently a vast difference between them ; from whence it appeared, that an imposture might take place in the one case, but not in the other. Moses by only stretching forth his rod, turned the river, and all the 'streams and pools, and all the waters, in vessels of wood and of stone, throughout all the land of Egypt, into blood, so that the fish that was in the river died, and the river stank.' The reality and great extent of the effect, showed the truth and divinity of the miracle, and that there was

And now it is manifest, that the author's inference will not bear, that because the magicians wrought such miracles, therefore the miracles wrought by Moses could give no attestation to the divine authority of his mission. For the miracles of the Egyptian sorcerers were very few in number, and those immediately controlled by a superior power. In this case, there is no absurdity in supposing, that God may suffer evil beings to exert their utmost power and art to deceive and impose upon the spectators, in behalf of error, and idolatry, and vice ; because there is a remedy at hand. The superior miracles, by which they are controlled and overpowered, open a way for detecting the delusion, and are a sufficient antidote against the bad influence those miracles might otherwise have upon the minds of men. But that he should suffer such an astonishing series of glorious works, so incomparably grand, and bearing all the marks of a divine power, and of a dominion over nature, such as were those which were wrought by Moses, that God should suffer those to be wrought by evil beings (even supposing it in the power of such beings to perform them, which was highly improbable) and that in attestation of falsehood and imposture, for a course of years together, without ever controlling them by any contrary or superior miracles ; this is a quite different case, and cannot possibly be reconciled to the wisdom and goodness of a superintending providence. And to suppose (as this writer does) that the vast superiority and amazing grandeur of Moses's miracles above those of the magicians, was no more a proof of his being sent of God than if he had overcome them by 'force of arms,' is a banter on the common sense of mankind ; except he could prove that there is nothing more extraordinary in the one case than in the other.

But the author further objects against the miracles of Moses, that 'he might have been assisted by some supernatural evil power, since his miracles were commonly wrought not for the good, but the destruction of mankind.' p. 27. And elsewhere he asks, 'for what good end were Moses's miracles done, supposing them to have been really wrought? And he pronounces, that 'it was only to destroy one nation, the Egyptians, and to enable the Israelites to destroy another nation, the Canaanites, by putting them all

nothing of juggle and delusion in it. For where could a quantity of blood be found at once sufficient to do all this, except we suppose a real transmutation of it? But with respect to the magicians, the case was otherwise. A small quantity of water must have been brought to them, that probably was got by digging ; which was the way the Egyptians took to get water to drink, Exod. vii. 24. If this was brought to them in a vessel, it was no hard matter, supposing the assistance of invisible agents, to convey that water away, and by a quick conveyance, put blood in the stead of it, which was then easily to be had every where. In this case there was room for a juggle and imposture, but not in the former. In like manner, with regard to the miracle of the frogs, Moses at once brought an immense quantity of frogs out of the river, streams, and pools of water, which filled the whole land at once, and even all the houses and chambers of the Egyptians ; and such an instantaneous production of so vast a quantity showed that it was not mere juggle, but that there was a creating power exerted in the production of them, and that the God of nature was concerned in it. But when this was done, the magicians might imitate this miracle by causing some frogs to come upon the land, which they might easily bring, by a quick and artificial conveyance, when frogs abounded every where, in the place where they pretended to work the miracle.

to the sword, without mercy or humanity,' &c. see p. 70. I answer, that the great end of Moses's miracles was plainly this, to give attestation to a most excellent law and constitution, established for the most wise and valuable purposes, as I showed largely in my former book. See Divine Authority, chap. 2. And if in the course of these miraculous dispensations, and in pursuance of the main ends of them, there were awful and exemplary judgments inflicted upon guilty nations, there was nothing in this that can be proved to be unsuitable to the character of a just and holy God. For since justice and purity are included in the idea of the Deity as well as goodness and mercy, extraordinary acts of power in execution of his righteous vengeance upon wicked persons and nations, may be as much the works of God, and bear as evident marks of divinity, as extraordinary acts of goodness and mercy. And in Moses's miracles, there were evident demonstrations of both these. As to the plagues inflicted upon the Egyptians, which the author has particularly in view, there was nothing in them unworthy of God as the wise and righteous governor of the world. The Egyptians had treated the Israelites with the utmost barbarity and insolence, and had been guilty of a series of oppressions scarce to be paralleled in history; and if, in this case, the Israelites had done themselves justice, and forced their way out of the inhospitable country, even to the destruction of those their enemies and oppressors, and had taken their substance with them, as a just compensation for the inhuman exactions and oppressions they had laid upon them; I presume, this author himself would scarce pretend there was any thing in this contrary to justice, and the law of nature and nations. And it is great odds, but that if it had been done by a people that happened to be in his favour, he would have commended it as manifesting a noble spirit of freedom in opposition to oppression and tyranny. And if the Israelites could not have been justly blamed for endeavouring, if it had been in their power, to free themselves from the Egyptian yoke, even by methods that might have ended in the ruin of their cruel and arbitrary oppressor; I can see no reason to prove, that it was unbecoming God to exert his own divine power in vindication of an injured people, and to exhibit a signal monument, to all ages, of his just detestation of tyrannical insolence and oppression. Especially when it is considered, that the plagues were not inflicted all at once, but by degrees, one after another: that Pharaoh and his Egyptians were told upon what terms they might be freed from them; even upon the terms of letting the oppressed people go: that these judgments were successively removed soon after their being inflicted, upon their expressing their repentance, and promising amendments: that the severest judgments of all, which touched their lives, such as the destruction of the first-born, and the overwhelming Pharaoh and his host in the Red Sea, were not inflicted till they had had such repeated demonstrations of the divine power and vengeance as rendered them utterly inexcusable; and that they had fair warning given them before the former of these was executed, and

might have prevented it by a proper conduct: and as to the latter, it was what they plainly brought upon themselves by their own presumption and obstinacy.

It must be farther considered, that, by the author's own acknowledgment, Egypt was the seat and fountain of idolatry and superstition, from whence it was derived and propagated to other nations. And in this view the propriety of the miracles wrought by Moses among the Egyptians is very evident. One manifest design of them was to confound idolatry in its proper seat and source, and to 'execute judgment against all the gods of Egypt,' as it is expressed, *Exod. xii. 12, Numb. xxxiii. 4*. Those amazing acts of divine power and vengeance might naturally have led the Egyptians, and especially their priests and rulers, to reflect on their ill conduct, not only in the oppressions they had exercised upon the Israelites, but in the idolatries they had too much countenanced and propagated; and tended to convince them, that their gods, of whom they entertained a high opinion, and whom they endeavoured to recommend to other nations, as proper objects of adoration, were vain and idle things, unable to defend or deliver themselves or their worshippers. And this should have led them to the acknowledgment and sole adoration of the only true God, the Lord of nature. This was both the natural tendency of those miracles, and is expressly said to have been one great design of them.* If they had produced this effect, they would have had a salutary influence, not only upon them but other nations, and been of signal service to mankind; and if they did not actually produce this effect, it could be charged upon nothing but their own obstinacy.

With respect to the case of the Canaanites, our author frequently insists upon it as a demonstration that the law of Moses could not possibly be from God. He looks upon the destruction of the Canaanites, which Moses commanded in the name of God, to be the most 'bloody outrage and profanation of the name of God that ever was known.' That it was contrary to all 'common humanity, and the laws of nature and nations, since the Canaanites had never done those holy butchers, or divine conquerors, the least injury.' He aggravates this in the strongest expressions, and returns to it upon all occasions; as particularly pp. 27, 29, 39. and again, pp. 70, 75, and in several other places.

I have elsewhere fully considered this objection, which had been urged in all its force by the author of 'Christianity as Old as the Creation.'† At present, I shall only observe, that if our author be disposed calmly to reason the case, and not think to carry his point by dint of clamour and confidence, and giving hard words, he must, in order to make good his argument, fairly prove that it is inconsistent with the idea of God, considered as the wise and righteous Governor of the world, to punish a guilty nation, even to utter destruction, for their execrable wickedness; or, that if it

* See *Exod. vii. 5, viii. 10, ix. 16, 29*.

† See 'Answer to Christianity,' &c. vol. ii. pp. 429—437.

be just in him to do so, he cannot commission another nation to be the executioners of his just sentence against them : or that, in that case, they cannot justly execute such commission ; and that this alone will be sufficient to prove that a dispensation was not given from God, which was confirmed by such illustrious miracles bearing all the characters of a divine interposition, and the laws of which were holy, just, and pure, and of an excellent tendency.

That it is not unworthy of God, as the righteous Governor of the world, to punish a guilty nation or nations, even to extirpation, for their wickedness, can scarce be denied by any that acknowledge a providence. If he should send a destructive plague or famine with this view, to punish a wicked people, it would be the highest presumption to arraign the justice or wisdom of his providence, though in this case infants as well as the adult, persons of every sex and age, and some comparatively innocent, would be involved in the common destruction ; but God knows how to make a difference between them in another world. There is scarce any fact that is vouched by a more universal tradition than the general deluge,* which destroyed almost the whole human race at once, as a punishment for the wickedness of mankind. There have been plagues that have raged over a great part of the earth, and have been thought to have destroyed near a third part of mankind. And I believe none that own a providence but will acknowledge a special hand of God in all this ; at least this author must do so, who affirms, that evil as well as good, punishments as well as mercies, come from God, p. 82. Now to apply this to the case of the Canaanites ; the destruction that God had determined to inflict upon them is expressly declared to be for their abominable wickedness and corruption of manners. They are charged not only with the most gross idolatries, but with the most unnatural and monstrous crimes of bestial impurity. See Lev. xviii. 3—25, xx. 2—23. Their vices a long time before this had brought down a most exemplary judgment upon considerable numbers among them, viz. the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah and the neighbouring cities. And they had afterwards a considerable space given them for repentance, near four hundred years. See Gen. xv. 13—16. But, notwithstanding the warning that had been given them, they grew worse and worse, and became so universally depraved in their manners, that the ‘ Lord was ready to spew out the inhabitants,’ as it is emphatically expressed, Lev. xviii. 25. If in this case God had sent a pestilence entirely to destroy the whole nation, or had rained a fiery deluge upon the whole land, as he had done upon Sodom and Gomorrah, his justice could not have been accused ; and it is very likely this author himself would scarce have presumed to find fault with it, though in this case infants as well as the adult, men, women, and children, must have perished in the common calamity.

And if God might justly destroy a nation for their wickedness, I

* See concerning this ‘ Grot. de Verit. Relig. Christ.’ l. i. s. 16.

think it must be allowed that it belongs to him to determine in what way he will think fit to execute that vengeance. And if he should think fit to give commission to another nation to execute that vengeance which he had decreed, I see not upon what principle this can be denied ; or how it will be proved to have anything in it unworthy of the Supreme Being. If it be, because it is unnatural and unfit for creatures of the same species to destroy one another, this cannot hold ; because there may be many cases alleged, in which creatures of the same kind may without fault deprive one another both of their lives and properties. Every body will allow that this may be done in execution of the sentence of a just magistrate, and that he may commission those to execute that sentence who were never personally injured by the persons on whom the punishment is inflicted. And in the case of wars between contending nations, it has never been accounted unjust for a prince to give commission to his enemies to conclude things in the enemies' country which will by necessary consequence bring ruin upon many innocent persons, and deprive them both of their substance and of their lives, though they had done nothing to deserve it, any further than as they were the members of such a community. And therefore I cannot see how it can reasonably be denied, that the Supreme Lord of the Universe may, if he thinks fit, without any impeachment of his governing wisdom and justice, give express commission, enjoining any man or number of men, to execute his righteous, though severe sentence, against a guilty people, even though it were to their utter extirpation, in which case some innocent persons would probably be involved.

And if God should give such a commission, expressly enjoining or commanding any man or any number of men, or a whole community, to destroy another nation, in a declared execution of his righteous vengeance upon them for their heinous wickedness, I do not see but that it would be very lawful, yea, it would be a duty, for such a people, so commissioned, to execute that sentence ; and, not to execute it, when known to be so, would be a crime ; as it would be a crime for the persons appointed and commissioned to execute the sentence of a just magistrate to refuse to execute it, out of a partial regard or pity to the persons thus suffering.

It will be easily granted, that such a commission to one nation to extirpate another, ought to be exceedingly well proved ; it must be plain and express, and given in a manner that leaves no room to doubt, that it is indeed a plain and express commission from God himself. And this I take to have been the present case. The commission that was given to destroy the Canaanites for their abominable wickedness was express and solemn ; it was the command of God himself, confirmed to be so by the most extraordinary attestations. The miracles done by Moses, and afterwards at the entrance of Israel upon the land of Canaan, were of such a nature, and bore such evident marks of a divine power and dominion, that it was scarce possible to regard them in any other view, than as proceeding from the sovereign Lord of the universe ; nor can it

well be conceived, that supposing God himself to have interposed, it could have been by more illustrious demonstrations of his own divine power and majesty than were here exhibited ; or, that supposing such an express commission to have been really given, it could have been more convincingly proved. And therefore, upon such a view of the case, it is wrong to charge what the Israelites did by express command of God himself, and in execution of his just sentence, as a proof of their transcendent guilt and wickedness, and as an instance of outrage and injustice beyond example ; since, though without such an express commission from God, it would have been cruel and unjust in them to do it, yet it was not cruel and unjust to do it in execution of that command. As persons may deprive others of their lives and substance in execution of the sentence of a just magistrate, and be sufficiently warranted in doing so by his authority and command, though to do the same thing without that authority, prompted by their own private passions and interests, would be murder and rapine. If it be urged, that this may serve as a precedent for other nations, to use their neighbours with the greatest cruelty and injustice, under pretence of their being very wicked and the enemies of God ; I answer, that it cannot justly be a precedent, except in the like circumstances. Let any nation produce the same proofs of an express commission from God himself that the Israelites did, and then their commission will be allowed. And if no other nations have a right to imitate them, till they can produce as express and illustrious evidences of an extraordinary divine commission as the Israelites had, I apprehend there is no great danger of any ill consequences from such a precedent.

Upon the whole, the real state of the case was this. The Canaanites were arrived to the most monstrous height of wickedness, deserving utter extirpation. God had determined to execute his just vengeance upon them for their crimes in the most exemplary manner. He had, at the same time, selected a people to himself, whom he determined to erect into a peculiar polity, and to whom he gave a body of pure and excellent laws ; the design of which was to maintain the worship of the only true God and the practice of righteousness. This people he chose for the executioners of his just vengeance, and gave them commission to destroy that wicked race. At the same time he declared the reason of it to be on account of their abominable idolatry and impurity, and wickedness of all kinds. And this was accompanied with the most solemn warnings to the Israelites not to commit such crimes, for that they themselves would be obnoxious to as great punishments if they imitated them in their idolatry and corruption of manners. And it is scarce possible to conceive, that any thing could have a greater influence to make them sensible of the atrociousness of those crimes, which they saw so exemplarily punished. This is the true state of the case, as it is represented to us in the Scripture ; and, notwithstanding all the author's noise and confidence, there is nothing in it, thus considered, that can be proved to be inconsistent with the idea of a just and holy Deity.

But there is another objection urged by this writer against the miracles wrought by Moses, and which, he thinks, seems to show, that if they were really wrought, 'he might have been assisted by some supernatural evil power;' and that is, that they 'were done out of a particular partiality in favour of one nation, who pretended to be the peculiar chosen people of God, whilst they were the very worst and wickedest part of the world,' p. 27. And then he breaks out into his usual invectives against the Jews, of whom he gives the most odious representation imaginable.

As to the erecting the Jews into a peculiar polity, distinguished from the rest of mankind, that there is nothing in this inconsistent with the divine perfections; yea, that it was ordered for very wise and excellent purposes, I have fully shown in my former book,* and shall have occasion to say something to it again in the following chapter. And supposing God selected any nation at all for a peculiar people to himself, I do not see why the Israelites were not as proper as any others: they came from worthy ancestors, and though, during their long continuance and oppression in Egypt, they probably fell very generally from the knowledge and practice of the true religion professed by their ancestors, yet it is highly probable that there were still many persons among them that preserved it; and, perhaps, more than were at that time in other nations. I think we may justly suppose them to have been better than the Egyptians their oppressors, and who were greatly instrumental in corrupting them; or than the Canaanites, who, as appears from the accounts given of them, were then arrived to the greatest height of vice, and monstrous wickedness. What was then the state of other nations we cannot certainly tell; but it appears, from the accounts given us by the best historians, of the ancient state of Greece and other countries at that time, that violence, rapes, and lawless wickedness, very much prevailed.† So that, for any thing that appears to the contrary, the body of the Israelites, with all their faults, were, at least, as good and as righteous as any other nation at that time. With regard to their after conduct, their greatest fault consisted in their suffering themselves to be enticed to a conformity to the neighbouring nations in their corrupt customs and practices; but though this was a very great fault, yet, considering the proneness of mankind in all ages to vice and idolatry, perhaps other nations, in their circumstances, would not have behaved better than they did. However this may be, there is no reason to talk of God's manifesting a partial conduct towards them, as this writer insinuates. On the contrary, the whole course of his dealings towards the Israelites, may give us a just idea of the wisdom, the righteousness, the equity of his providence, and the impartiality of his judgments: since, though he had entered into a special relation to them as his people, yet he never connived at or approved their crimes: but as he heaped benefits upon them when they kept

* See 'Div. Authority,' &c. chap. 2.

† See 'Thucyd.' lib. 1 and 'Plutarch in Thesseo.'

close to his covenant, so he punished them in an exemplary manner for their disobedience; and again accepted them upon their repentance and return. Such particularly were his dealings towards them in the wilderness, every way agreeable to his own perfections. He, on many occasions, signalized his mercy towards them; and he also manifested a just displeasure against their miscarriages and revolts. And from his dealings towards them we may learn this useful lesson, that no pretence of special favour or outward privileges will secure those from his just displeasure that allow themselves in a course of presumptuous sin and disobedience. And this was the use that the Israelites in after ages were taught to make of those extraordinary facts. As appears particularly from the lxxviiith Psalm, where, from the consideration of God's dealings with their fathers in the wilderness, they are instructed to conceive of him, as a God full of compassion and of great mercy, and, at the same time, as a Being of infinite justice and purity. And the apostle makes the same use of it in 2 Cor. x. 11.

Thus it appears, that the author's objections against the miracles of Moses, drawn from the end for which they were wrought, will not bear. On the other hand, an argument may be brought from the nature of those miracles and the end for which they were wrought, to prove that they could not be the works of an evil being. For can it be thought that an evil being (if he had been able to have performed all those glorious miracles, which is very absurd to suppose) would have exerted himself in such amazing and extraordinary acts of power and dominion for such purposes as these; to triumph over idols, and confound the chief patrons and propagators of idol-worship; to punish tyranny and oppression, and manifest his abhorrence of vice and wickedness; to establish and give attestation to a law and polity, the great and fundamental design of which was to establish the worship and adoration of the one only living and true God, in opposition to the then prevailing idolatry and polytheism; the moral precepts of which were pure and excellent, and its rituals wisely contrived; and which would have been effectual, if carefully observed, to preserve those to whom it was given from the idolatrous rites and corrupt customs of the neighbouring nations? If this cannot, without great absurdity, be supposed, then those miracles which evidently transcended all the art and power of man, must have been wrought, either by the immediate power of God himself, or, which comes to the same thing in this case, by subordinate good beings, acting under him and by his direction; and consequently must be regarded as yielding an illustrious testimony to the divine mission of Moses and to the divine original and authority of his laws, in attestation of which they were wrought.

There is one passage more which this writer has, relating to the design and use of Moses' miracles, which I shall here take notice of. It is in p. 61, where he observes, that 'God had never left himself without a standing and most glorious witness and proof of his being and perfections to mankind, infinitely superior to the

evidence of all those miracles of Moses, supposing them to have been really wrought; which could only astonish and confound, but not possibly prove the truth and righteousness of such a religion as that. The moral law could need no proof from miracles, as depending upon a much clearer and superior proof before; and the ceremonial law was incapable of any proof at all, as having any thing of religion in it.' But since we find that notwithstanding the standing proofs of a Deity in the works of creation and providence, the nations were generally fallen into idolatry and the worship of inferior deities, and this coloured over with artful and specious pretences, as well as into a 'great corruption of manners, will any man pretend to prove, that it was unworthy or unfit for the great Lord and Governor of the universe to interpose, by extraordinary exertions of his own divine power and dominion, to awaken men to a sense of his supreme majesty and glory, and to give attestation to laws, the principal design of which was expressly to forbid all idol-worship, or the worship of inferior deities, and the worship of God by images; and which also exhibited a system of pure and excellent morals, in plain and express precepts, enjoined and confirmed by a divine authority, which must needs give a mighty additional weight and force to them? As to our author's pretence, that the ceremonial injunctions were incapable of any proof at all, as having any thing of religion in them, this depends upon this principle, that God cannot command or enjoin any thing of a ceremonial nature to be used in religion at all; a principle highly absurd in itself, and contrary to what this author himself elsewhere allows, who acknowledges that God can, if he thinks fit, prescribe things of a positive nature. See *Mor. Phil.* vol. 1. pp. 87, 88. And indeed, things of this kind may be so circumstanced as to be subservient to the main ends of religion; they may be instituted for wise purposes. Such evidently were some of the ritual injunctions of the law of Moses; and we have reason to think so of all the rest, though we may not be able to assign the particular reasons of them at this distance. And therefore, such a series of glorious miracles, wrought in attestation of a body of laws, containing such ritual injunctions as well as moral precepts, may be reasonably regarded as giving an attestation to those ritual injunctions, as making up a part of those laws. And as to what the author there adds, concerning the absurdity of making a law, enjoining such ceremonial rites to be the 'irreversible unalterable will of God,' this is wrongly represented. That law, in the ritual part of it, was never designed to be irreversible and unalterable, but was only assigned to be in force till a more perfect dispensation should succeed, to which it was intended to be preparatory and subservient.

Let us now proceed to what our author offers with regard to the miracles wrought by our Lord Jesus Christ. And here, first, he would persuade us, that Christ's miracles were not done at all with a view to prove his divine mission, or the truth and divinity of his doctrines, but only 'to procure him a sufficient degree of attention from the people, &c. For that they having heard of nothing but

miracles, and having been settled in nothing but what had been confirmed and proved by miracles, it was absolutely necessary for him to work more and greater miracles than had been done before, without which he could never have gained any regard to the most obvious truths from so stupid a generation,' &c. He adds, that 'their attention being once procured, it was the native intrinsic evidence of eternal, immutable, divine truth, that convinced the understanding, and made its own way to the hearts and consciences of men.' And that 'though miracles might be necessary to make way for this and procure attention, they could be no proper evidence or additional proof of it,' p. 33, &c.

But since our Saviour was undoubtedly the best judge of the design of his own miracles, it is but just to consider the account he himself gives of them. It is evident that he speaks of himself all along as sent from God, in an extraordinary manner, as a person of wonderful dignity, the only-begotten Son of God, in a most eminent and transcendent sense, in which that character can be attributed to no other, and as perfectly acquainted with the Father's will: and that accordingly he claimed their regard to his mission as divine; he spoke to them as with a divine authority, and urged it upon them as their indispensable duty to believe in him and obey him. Now what were the proofs and evidences he brought of this his divine authority and mission? It is undeniably evident, from the passages I cited in my former book, p. 28, that he himself appeals to the illustrious miracles he performed, as plain and sufficient proofs and evidences of it. These his miracles he represents as 'works which his Father had given him to finish;' yea, that it was 'the Father that dwelt in him that did these works; that they were wrought by the Holy Ghost, and by the finger, that is, the power of God. He expressly represents them as a testimony given to him by God himself; and that they bore witness to him, that the 'Father had sent him;' and that he was 'in the Father,' and the 'Father in him.' And accordingly, he urges his wonderful works as a reason why they should not merely attend to him, but believe in him, and receive with an unshaken faith the declarations he made, and the doctrines he taught in his Father's name. See John v. 36, x. 24, 25, 37, 38, xiv. 10, 11. Matt. xii. 28, 31. Luke xi. 20. From all which passages it is extremely evident, that our Saviour represents the miracles he performed as really and in themselves a just and valid testimony to the divinity of his mission and to the truth and certainty of his doctrines. And accordingly, it is manifest that he appeals to his miracles as proofs, in cases where it cannot be pretended that there was any intrinsic evidence in the nature of the thing to support his declarations. So in the fifth chapter of John he had declared, that 'as the Father raiseth the dead, and quickeneth them, even so the Son quickeneth whom he will;' that the Father had 'given him authority to execute judgment;' and that all that were 'in the graves should hear his voice, and should come forth to the resurrection of life or of damnation.' What was the evidence upon which the Jews were to believe these declarations? Was there any

thing in the nature of the thing that could merely by its own intrinsic evidence, persuade the Jews that Christ was the person appointed by the Father to raise the dead and judge the world? Will our author say in this case, that it was the 'native intrinsic evidence of immutable eternal truth' that convinced their understandings? No. The credit of these declarations rested not merely on the nature of the thing, but on the proofs he gave of his divine mission, that he was indeed extraordinarily sent of God, and that what he delivered as from God was true, as being confirmed by the testimony of God himself. And accordingly, after having made those declarations, he expressly appeals to his miracles, as bearing testimony to him in a manner that could not be denied or contested. See ver. 36.

The only proof this writer brings, that our Saviour did not produce his miracles as evidences of his divine mission, or of his being a true prophet sent from God, is this; that when the Pharisees attributed his miracles to a confederacy with Beelzebub, the prince of the devils, our Saviour answered them, 'If I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your sons cast them out? therefore they shall be your judges.' Which words suppose, that 'their own sons or their own party cast out devils by some means, and to some ends and purposes or other; which was, doubtless, to support their own superstition, or to maintain their usurped dominion over the understandings and consciences of men, by the specious and plausible pretence of miracles, as a proof of divine authority, p. 35.

It is hard to know what our author would bring this argument to prove. Does he intend it for a proof that our Saviour here supposes or grants, that the Pharisees or any false prophets wrought, or could work as glorious miracles in confirmation of their own superstition and tyranny, as those which he himself performed? It is impossible that this could be his intention in this passage: because it is undeniably manifest, from the passages already produced, that he appeals upon all occasions to his miracles; and all along goes upon this foundation, that none but one that was extraordinarily sent of God could perform such works as he did. He expressly declares, speaking of the scribes and pharisees, and rulers of the Jews, that rejected him, that if he 'had not done the works among them which no other man did, they had not had sin.' John xv. 24. Which plainly implies, that the miracles he wrought were such as no deceiver could perform; and that they were proper proofs and evidences of his divine mission, and of the truth of what he taught and delivered in the name of God.

What then is the argument the author would found upon this passage? The utmost that can be made of it is this, that there were some among the Jews, and of whom the Pharisees had a good opinion, that did cast out devils. And, for any thing that appears to the contrary, they might really be good men, who were enabled to perform some extraordinary works of this kind for the good of mankind and for the relief of the afflicted and oppressed, without a particular view to the attestation of any doctrines. Nor doth it

appear that those that did these works set up for teachers at all; though this writer, without the least proof, supposes that they wrought these miracles in confirmation of the peculiar superstitions of the Pharisees; whereas, if they were wrought in testimony of any thing at all, it was in testimony to the supreme power and glory of the only true God, whom the Jews worshipped, in opposition to the heathen deities and demon-worship. But the truth is, it doth not appear that there were then any among the Jews that did really cast out devils, nor doth our Saviour's argument necessarily suppose it. The people were mightily struck with the evidence of his miracles, and concluded from thence, that he must be the Son of David, i. e. the promised Messiah, Matt. xii. 22, 23. And this, by the way, manifestly shows, that the miracles he performed were of an extraordinary and peculiar nature. And if any other, at that time, pretended to perform any wonderful works, it is plain that the people themselves were convinced that there was a vast difference between him and them, and between his works and theirs.* The Pharisees, to take off the force of this impression, did not pretend that there were persons among themselves that wrought as great miracles as he; which undoubtedly they would have done, if they could have said it with the least appearance of truth; because this would have plainly showed that his doing such works, which many others performed as well as he, could not be a proof or evidence that he was the Christ. But it is evident they could not say this, and therefore were forced to have recourse to a very absurd pretence, viz. that he 'cast out devils by Beelzebub, the prince of the devils.' This carried an intimation in it, that his miracles were indeed extraordinary, and of a nature far superior to any works that other persons performed; but that this was owing to his being assisted by the 'prince of the devils,' and whose power and dominion were far superior to all the rest. Our Saviour shows the absurdity of this, both by a direct argument from the nature of the thing, and by an argument *ad hominem*. The direct argument is drawn from the great absurdity of supposing that Satan should cast out Satan; as if that subtle and malicious spirit would enter into a confederacy to exert his own power for the good of mankind, and to dispossess his own associates, and thus engage against the interests of his own kingdom. The other argument was *ad hominem*. 'If I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your children cast them out? therefore they shall be your judges.' There were several among the Jews at that time, that pretended to be exorcists and to cast out devils. An instance of this we have in the sons of Sceva, mentioned Acts xix. 13. Now the Pharisees were far from charging those persons with acting in a confederacy with Satan. Our Saviour therefore urges them with this, to show their unreasonable partiality, and the malice and injustice of their charge. But this does not necessarily suppose that any of them did really cast out devils, or

* We find the people, on another occasion, saying, 'It was never so seen in Israel.' Matt. ix. 33.

that our Saviour himself thought so. It was enough that they pretended to do it, and that the Pharisees acknowledged it, or pretended to acknowledge it. For, in this case, the force of the argument was still the same, and they were manifestly self-condemned, which was all our Saviour intended by it.

As to what this writer pretends, that our Saviour there laid the whole stress of his argument, not upon the extraordinary nature of his works, but upon the ends and purposes for which they were performed; and that he 'insisted upon it, that his miracles were all exerted for the good of mankind; and not only for their outward temporal good, but to enlighten their understandings, and bring them to the true knowledge of God and themselves,' &c. Though it be very true in itself, that his miracles were designed for the good of mankind, spiritual and temporal, yet it is not true that this is what our Saviour here insists upon in his argument with the Pharisees. There is not one word here offered to this purpose. And whereas this writer takes upon him to affirm, that abstracting from the end for which our Saviour's miracles were wrought, 'the plea of the scribes and Pharisees, as to any argument from miracles, must have been as good as Christ's own plea, and have gone as far,' p. 36. This goes upon the supposition, that the scribes and Pharisees performed miracles equal to those of Christ. A supposition which is absolutely false, and which they themselves never had the confidence to pretend. I add, that in this very passage we are now considering, our Saviour plainly supposes that the miracles he wrought were such as manifested a divine agency: and that resisting them, was resisting the strongest evidence. For it is on this occasion that he represents the great danger and unpardonable guilt of the sin or blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, viz. ascribing the works of God to the power of Satan.

I need not take notice of what our author goes on to observe, that wicked men might work miracles, and that Christ himself supposes, that some that had 'done wonderful works in his name,' should be rejected at the last day as workers of iniquity, p. 36. This hath been fully considered and obviated in the book he pretends to answer. See Divine Authority, pp. 26, 384. But it may be proper to make some remarks on what he offers concerning the faith of healing, which, he tells us, 'was indispensably necessary to the bodily cures, whether the person healed was a morally good or bad man. 'Dost thou believe? if thou believest, thou mayest be healed; thy faith hath made thee whole; and be it unto thee according to thy faith;' was the constant language and indispensable condition of those miraculous cures.' He says, 'that this faith only wrought by the force and power of imagination, and must have had the effects, whether it had been well or ill grounded.' He observes, that 'Christ could work few or no miracles among his neighbours, the Galileans, because of their unbelief;' and that one should think, had the miracles been intended as a test of truth, they ought chiefly to have been wrought upon

unbelievers, as the most effectual means of their conviction and conversion: but it is plain the case was quite otherwise,' pp. 37, 38.

The design of all this seems evidently to be, to depreciate Christ's miracles, as if the miraculous cures he wrought were rather owing to the strength of fancy and imagination in the patient, than to power in the agent. But there are many of his miracles, with respect to which there can be no pretence for alleging this. If the strength of their own imagination could have an influence to heal the persons themselves that were under the malady, could that of others do it? Could the centurion's faith, that is, because in this author's sense he had a strong imagination himself, could this heal his dying servant? Or could the ruler's faith heal his son, and that in an instant, and at a distance? I suppose it will scarce be pretended, that in the case of his raising the dead, the imagination of the dead persons themselves was so strong, as to contribute to their own resurrection. Or could the faith of Martha and Mary, that is, as the author understands it, the strength of their imagination, raise their brother Lazarus from the grave, after he had lain dead there four days? If Christ ordinarily required faith in those whom he healed, (though many instances might be produced of his healing persons without any previous requiring them to believe; as in the case of his healing the man with the withered hand, Mark iii. 3, 5, and the impotent man that had an infirmity thirty eight years, John v. 5, 7, 8, and in the case of his healing the high-priest's servant that had his ear cut off, and who was one of those that came to apprehend him;) but if he ordinarily required faith in those on whom he wrought the miracles, the design is plain, it was to let them see what was the true and proper end of his miracles; that it was not merely to do acts of kindness to their bodies, but to confirm his divine mission, and strengthen their faith in him; and that their believing in him, and submitting to the evidence he brought, was a proper disposition of mind, pleasing to God, and which tended to qualify them for partaking of his benefits. As to our author's insinuation, that Christ ought to have wrought his miracles for the conviction and conversion of unbelievers; but that this was not the case; it is certain that this was one great design of Christ's miracles; and accordingly they had this effect, that many that did not believe in him before, were brought by the evidence of his miracles to believe; though where persons manifested an invincible hardness and infidelity, they were justly left to the effect of their own obstinacy. And when it is said that he 'could not do many mighty works' among his countrymen of Nazareth, 'because of their unbelief,' it is plain this was not owing to any want of power in him to perform his mighty works; but when he saw them so obstinate and hardened in their incredulity, that no miracles would have an influence upon them, and that instead of giving a due attention to his doctrine they rejected it, and went about to kill him; he judged them unworthy to have many miracles wrought among them, though

he did some. And both in Scripture and other writings, it is a very usual way of speaking, that persons cannot do a thing, which, for good reasons, they do not think fit to do.

I shall only, before I leave this section, take notice of one thing more, which this writer has advanced with as much confidence as if it were certainly true, and he could prove it; and that is, that when 'St. Paul came to preach the gospel to the Gentiles, we hear but very little of any miracle wrought among them.*' He had a gospel to preach, and doctrines to be delivered to them that must make their own way, and force conviction as soon as they came to be duly considered,' p. 42. The contrary to this is so true, that almost all the miracles we read of, that were done by St. Paul, were wrought among the Gentiles, and for their conviction, to bring them to the acknowledgment of the truth. Thus, Acts xv. 12, we find that Barnabas and Paul 'declared what miracles and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them.' The great miracles he wrought, during his stay at Ephesus, were wrought not merely before the Jews, but principally before the Greeks, and had an influence to convert them to the faith, xix. 10, 11, &c, 17, 18. To the Corinthians, who had been for the most part Gentiles, he declares, that 'truly the signs of an apostle were wrought by him among them, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds,' 1 Cor. xii. 12. And to the Romans, giving an account of his preaching the gospel among the Gentiles, and the progress he had made, he speaks of the 'things which Christ had wrought by him, to make the Gentiles obedient by word and deed, through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God,' Rom. xv. 18, 19. And though no part of St. Paul's doctrine was contrary to the clear and evident principles of right reason, yet it is incontestably evident, to any one that ever read his epistles, that several of the doctrines he taught were such as could never have been proved by reason alone, or have made their way to the minds of men merely by their own native force and intrinsic evidence; and the proper proof of which rested on the evidence there was of his having received what he taught by revelation from God, and being under the unerring guidance of his Holy Spirit. And, it is certain, that this was what he himself pretended to, and on that account claimed a regard to the doctrines which he preached, as of divine authority. As hath been fully proved in my former book, pp. 218, 219.

Thus I have considered every thing this writer has to show, that miracles can in no case be proper proofs and evidences of the divine

* We find St. Paul, in his admirable discourse to the Athenians, appeals to Christ's resurrection from the dead, as a certain proof and assurance to mankind of his being appointed by God to judge the world, as he himself had declared, Acts xvii. 31. And elsewhere the same apostle saith, that Christ 'was declared to be the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead,' Rom. i. 4. From whence, it is evident, that in the judgment of this great apostle, for whom our author professes so great a regard, miracles may be of such a nature, and so circumstanced, as to yield a proper and sufficient attestation to the truth of a person's divine mission, and to the authority of his doctrine.

mission of any person, or the truth and divine authority of any doctrine; and, particularly, that the miracles wrought by Moses, and these wrought by our Lord Jesus Christ and his apostles, even taking the account of them for true, as given in the sacred writings, were not such proofs and evidences. It is very likely, that in his great sufficiency he may well pronounce concerning what I have here said, as well as he has done concerning what was said on this subject in my former book, that it is 'entirely oratorical and declamatory, without any thing of argument in it,' and that it is to no purpose to follow me in such a wild-goose chase. And the world, no doubt, by this time, must be so well acquainted with the ability, the candour, and modesty of this writer, and to take his bare word for it that it is so.

I have hitherto proceeded upon the supposition of the truth of the miraculous facts, recorded to have been done at the first establishment of the Jewish and Christian dispensation. If the question be, what reason there is to think that those facts are true, and to be depended on; I answer, that they come to us with all the evidence that can be reasonably desired, or that the nature of the thing will admit of, and it were perfectly absurd and unreasonable to desire more. The only way that all mankind do, and must depend upon, for knowing past facts, is either by oral tradition, which may indeed serve to preserve the remembrance of some principal facts, but is not much to be depended on for an exact conveyance of laws, doctrines, and the particular circumstances of fact; or by authentic records written at the time when the facts were done, and the laws given. And all the world owns, that these may in many cases, be so circumstanced, that we cannot reasonably doubt of the facts and laws so transmitted. If God should, in his great goodness, make an extraordinary revelation of his will, concerning matters of great importance to mankind, the possibility, and even usefulness of which our author pretends not to deny; and if, to convince the world of the truth and divinity of that revelation, he should cause it to be accompanied with the most illustrious miraculous attestations; in this case it would be sufficient that those attestations were given when that revelation was first published to the world.* And this being once done, and the authority of those doctrines and laws fully established, all that would be necessary for the use of mankind, in succeeding ages, would be this; that those laws and doctrines, together with an account of those extraordinary miraculous attestations, should be transmitted in such a manner, and with such a degree of evidence, as might be safely depended upon, and give a sufficient reasonable assurance, that these are the laws or doctrines that were originally given as by revelation from God, and that these facts were done. And this is the case of the Mosaic and Christian revelation. The laws and doctrines of both were at first published in the most

* That to desire that those miraculous attestations should be continually repeated, would be a most unreasonable demand, I have shown, pp. 22, 23.

open and public manner. Those of Moses were delivered to a whole nation, who were to be governed by those laws, in their successive generations. The Christian laws and doctrines were immediately published throughout a considerable part of the then known world, by persons divinely commissioned to that purpose. The facts whereby both the Mosaical and Christian revelation was attested were done in public view, before great numbers of persons; they were of such a nature, and attended with such circumstances, such evidence of their reality, that those that were eye-witnesses of them could not be deceived in them themselves, or doubt of their reality, without renouncing the testimony of all their senses. Upon the credit of these facts, as undeniably true and evident, those laws and doctrines were immediately received by great numbers who had all possible opportunities of knowing whether those facts were true; and many of whom were deeply prejudiced against the laws, &c. so attested. The remembrance of those doctrines and facts was not merely handed down by oral tradition, but they were immediately committed to writing; and these writings were published in that very age, and among the persons that could not but know whether those accounts were true. The writings containing an account of the law of Moses, and the facts whereby it was attested, were published by Moses himself before his own death. Nor were they to be concealed or kept private in a few hands, but by the express appointment of the law itself were to be made known and considered by all the people, who were carefully to instruct their children in the knowledge both of the laws and facts. And accordingly we find that nation, in all their various revolutions, still in possession of those laws, and still preserving a remembrance of those extraordinary facts. And, indeed, there was all possible provision made in the law itself for keeping up the constant remembrance of those facts by several remarkable constitutions, which were designed for this very purpose. Those writings are still regarded, as containing the rule both of their civil and religious policy, from which, even in the times of their greatest degeneracy, they never totally and universally apostatized; and therefore were still looked upon by many among them with veneration, and their sacredness and divine authority acknowledged. And if we examine the writings themselves, they bear all the characters of genuine antiquity, and the original simplicity. Nor have any alterations been made in them in those instances, in which it may be justly supposed the Jews, in succeeding ages, would have altered them, if they durst have attempted to corrupt them at all.

And with respect to the original Christian records, they were immediately dispersed in the very age in which they were first written, that is, in the age in which the laws were published and the facts were done. In that age they were dispersed into many hands in different parts of the world, received with great veneration, read in the public assemblies, soon translated into various languages, ever since constantly appealed to by friends and enemies, by persons

of different sects and parties, and with different views, large portions of them transcribed into the writings of others, and commented upon. A general corruption of them, either in the doctrines or facts, as the case was circumstanced, if it had been attempted, would have been an impossible thing. And it is evident, in fact, that they have not been corrupted, in instances where it might be supposed to have been the interest and inclination of some persons to have corrupted them. Nothing appears in them of the corruption of the following ages. They carry all the marks of genuine purity and simplicity that any writings can possibly have. Upon the whole, there is as much evidence as can reasonably be desired, that these are the very original laws and doctrines, and the original accounts of those facts written in the very age in which those facts were done. And I do not see what can reasonably be expected more; unless we are resolved not to believe, except we ourselves, at this distance, have ocular demonstration of the facts done in past ages; which is to demand a thing absurd and impossible. All this is what I have largely shown in a former treatise, to which I have referred in a book this author has undertaken to answer, p. 39. Yet he thinks fit frequently to represent me as taking the facts for granted, without having offered the least proof. But I know no obligation I am under to repeat the proof in every book, when I had done it largely and fully before, to which no answer has been yet returned. I shall however take some notice, in the next chapter, of what he offers with regard to the law of Moses, and the facts whereby that law was attested. And as to the original records of Christianity, Mr. Chapman has fully shown that they are transmitted to us with unquestionable evidence of their being genuine and uncorrupted in all material points, both as to doctrines and facts. Our author has not thought fit to answer what that learned writer has urged on this head, and yet persists as securely in repeating his general clamours about the uncertainty of human testimony, as if nothing at all had been offered in this case; or as if he himself had clearly confuted it.

CHAPTER IV.

The law of Moses is in itself reasonable and excellent. This does not render the attestation given it by miracles needless; but strengthens and enforces it. The covenant of peculiarity not a vain pretence and national delusion. The argument brought against it from the authority of St. Paul and the nature of the Abrahamic covenant considered. The God of Israel not represented in Scripture as a national, local, tutelar deity. The author's strange way of accounting for some of Moses's miracles. The extravagance of his suppositions shown. The objections against his being the author of the Pentateuch, considered and obviated. The plan Moses

laid down for the conquest of Canaan, not inconsistent with the nature of the promise made to Abraham. Other exceptions of this writer considered.

THE principal design of my former book was to vindicate the Mosaical and Christian revelation against the objections this writer had brought against them. And before I entered on a particular discussion of his objections against the law of Moses, I premised some general considerations concerning the nature and design of that law. It was shown, that its moral precepts were pure and excellent; that its ritual injunctions were appointed for wise reasons; that the whole Mosaic constitution was designed for excellent ends; for preserving the knowledge and worship of the only true God in opposition to all idolatry, and for engaging those to whom it was given to the practice of righteousness; that it was a constitution that answered many wise purposes of Divine Providence, and was made subservient to the general good of mankind. This was in opposition to the odious representation this writer has made of the law of Moses, as if it was the worst constitution in the world. In this last book, which is professedly written in vindication of his former, he has been pleased to pass by what I had offered concerning the excellency of that law, and thinks it sufficient to observe, that by endeavouring to show the reasonableness and excellency of that law, I have 'entirely overthrown and given up the argument of my first chapter, concerning the proof from miracles. With this observation he begins his second section,' pp. 53, 54. But the weakness of this pretence, and the consistency of the scheme I advanced, has been fully shown.* If I had affirmed that the reasonableness and good tendency of the Mosaic constitution was alone considered a sufficient proof that Moses had it by extraordinary revelation from God, this would have been a contradicting my first chapter, in which I say, that 'the reasonableness of a doctrine or law will never alone prove that the man that teaches that doctrine, or brings that law, had it by immediate revelation from God.' But to say that, because I assert the reasonableness and excellent design of that law, therefore I cannot consistently lay any stress upon the extraordinary miraculous attestations that were given to that law, as proofs of its divine authority, is a strange way of arguing. On the contrary, this sets the proof from miracles in the strongest light. For, though it might be justly concluded, from the very nature and circumstances of those miracles, that they were such as could never be done, nor would God suffer them to be done in attestation of an imposture; yet, when to this it is farther added, that the main design of that law and constitution was pure and excellent, for promoting the worship of the only true God, and the practice of righteousness, this furnisheth a further demonstration, that those miracles were not wrought by evil beings, and that, consequently, since they undeniably transcended all the power of man, they must have been wrought by God himself, or by good beings

* See pp. 58, 59.

acting under his special direction and influence; and therefore may be justly regarded as sufficient proofs that Moses, in attestation of whose divine mission they were done, was indeed extraordinarily sent of God; and that the scheme of laws he professed to have received from God, did indeed come from God, and was of divine authority.

Our author, after a digression in his rambling way, concerning the spiritual scholastics, &c. in which he says nothing but what has been already fully considered and obviated, proceeds to offer something concerning the 'covenant of peculiarity with the Jews.' I had shown that there was nothing in this constitution that can be proved to be inconsistent with the divine perfections, or to derogate from his universal goodness; and that it was appointed for wise and valuable ends, several of which were mentioned.* But our author here gives us his word for it, that it was all a 'vain pretence and national delusion, in which their prophets and historians had greatly contributed to support, humour, and encourage the pride, vanity, and superstition of the common people,' pp. 53, 56. Though soon after he is so kind as to excuse the prophets, who 'might have good reason from the necessity of the case, considering the blindness and obduracy of the people they had to deal with. And though some enthusiasts may call this imposture; yet, where it was necessary for the good of a nation, it must have been justifiable.' It seems that the prophets, according to him, were in the right to 'encourage and humour the pride, vanity, and superstition of that people, and to support them in a vain notion and delusion. And if any man will presume to call this imposture, he will incur our author's heavy censure, and must be content to pass for an enthusiast. He had talked at the same rate in his former book, that a 'wise and good man may falsify and deceive without injury, and secure his own private interest for the public good.' It is lawful, it seems, to pretend inspiration, to forge miracles and revelations, whenever it is apprehended that this may be for the good of a nation. This is one instance of our author's application of his rule of moral truth and fitness, and of judging of the fitness of a thing by its connexion with our happiness. There may be a moral truth and fitness even in falsehood, when we apprehend it tends to our own or others' good. Pious frauds are very innocent things, and must not be found fault with any more. There is either no real evil in falsehood and imposture; and if so, I cannot see upon what foundation it can be asserted, what all mankind have hitherto acknowledged, that 'it is impossible for God to lie;' or, if it be in itself evil, it is sanctified by the goodness of the end, and then I cannot see but the same pretence may justify false oaths and perjuries. In this, it must be owned, our author's morality and fitness of things is widely different from that taught us in Scripture, and particularly by the apostle Paul, who will not allow that a lie is sanctified under pretence that the glory of God is promoted by it,

* See pp. 27, 28, 32.

and pronounces that the damnation of those is just, that teach 'that we may do evil that good may come of it,' Rom. iii. 7, 8.

But not to insist any longer upon this, he asks, 'How shall we know or prove that God did enter into a special relation to that people? Must we take their own words, or the proud superstitious imagination of their own people for it?' p. 59.* I answer, that it is proved by the same evidence by which the divine authority of the law of Moses is proved, which was in its very original constitution in the nature of a special covenant with that people; in which God condescended to enter into a particular relation to them, and erected them into a peculiar polity for wise and valuable ends; and consequently it was confirmed by the testimony of God himself, who, as hath been already shown, did, in an extraordinary manner, bear witness to the divine mission of Moses, and to the divine original and authority of the laws he delivered in his name. And I hope, whatever our author thinks the prophets would do, he will hardly pretend that God himself would endeavour to 'humour and encourage the pride, and vanity, and superstition' of that people, by making them believe he intended to enter into a special relation to them, when he did not.

But if we will believe him, he has St. Paul on his side, who has, in a manner demonstratively set this covenant of peculiarity aside, by proving that the covenant of promise, which God made with Abraham, had no peculiar relation to Abraham's natural seed, or to the Jewish nation, but extended equally to all mankind, or to all the sincere worshippers of the one true God, in all nations, and at all times, to the end of the world, pp. 58, 59. The author as his manner is, triumphs upon this, as if it were perfect demonstration. But it is hard to see where the force of this reasoning lies. The apostle sets himself to prove, that Abraham, in whom the Jews boasted as their father, was justified by faith: he believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness, even when he was yet uncircumcised: and God promised, that in him, and his seed, should all nations be blessed. This promise related to the blessing that should come upon all nations, through Jesus Christ, who was to come of the seed of Abraham. And, consequently, all true believers, even among the Gentiles, were to have an interest in that blessing, being justified by faith as Abraham was, without the observation of the law of Moses; which came after that promise, and was not designed to repeal or abrogate it. This is the apostle's reasoning, Gal. iii. Rom. iv. And it is strong and cogent against those judaizing teachers, who urged, that it was absolutely necessary, that even the Gentiles should be circumcised, and observe the law, in order to their being justified and saved. But doth it follow from thence, that God never entered into any special relation to the people of Israel at all, nor erected them into a peculiar polity? it is

* In this way of talking, as well as in several other things, our author treads in the steps of Dr. Tindal, the absurdity of whose rule of judging of truth or falsehood, by its tendency, has been elsewhere exposed.

evident, the apostle neither saith nor intendeth such a thing. On the contrary, in that very chapter, the author seems to refer to it, Gal. iii. He plainly supposes, that the law of Moses was really ordained of God, through the ministry of angels, ver. 19, but denies that it was intended to disannul that promise that had been made long before, concerning God's blessing all nations in Abraham and his seed, or make it of none effect, ver. 17. And then goes on to show, that the law was designed only in a subserviency to that promise, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made. That it was designed to be a schoolmaster to lead men unto Christ; that it kept them under a strict discipline and bondage, like that which an heir is under whilst he is subject to tutors and governors, till the time appointed of the Father. But now men are freed from it by the coming of Christ, the proper end of it being answered; and all distinction is to be taken away. There is now neither Jew nor Greek, but all are one in Christ Jesus, ver. 23, 24, 28. chap. iv. 1—4.

This writer asks, p. 58, how it appears, that this people, viz. the Jews, were ever such peculiar servants of the Almighty, or that they were ever under any such special relation of adoption, or sonship, as they pretended to? I answer, it appears, among other things by the testimony of St. Paul himself, whom he pretends to produce to the contrary; who expressly declares, that to them pertained the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises, Rom. ix. 4. iii. 2. And it is undeniably manifest, that though there was a general promise made to Abraham, that all nations should be blessed in him, and in his seed, that is, in Christ, who was to proceed from him; to which promise the apostle refers in his arguings on this subject; yet there was also a particular promise and covenant of a more limited nature, and more immediately relating to his posterity by Isaac, in which God engaged to give them the land of Canaan for a possession, and that he would be their God, viz. in a special relation, Gen. xvii. 8, And the peculiar constitution of Moses was in consequence of this promise and covenant made with Abraham, and was a fulfilment of it, Exod. ii. 24. But there was nothing either in that particular promise made to Abraham relating to his seed by Isaac, nor in the peculiar constitution established by Moses in the name of God, that was at all inconsistent with the general promise made to Abraham relating to all nations being blessed in him. Nor did it follow, that because God erected the people of Israel into a peculiar polity, and gave them peculiar distinctive rites for wise purposes, that therefore he would not accept those of any other nation that truly believed in him, and worshipped and served him in sincerity. Other nations were not by this put more out of the favour of God, or into a worse condition than they were in before. God's universal goodness still continued the same that it was, and all that feared God, and worked righteousness, though not belonging to that peculiar polity, were still accepted and justified, as Abraham himself had been. And, accordingly, under the Mosaic constitution,

though no idolaters were to be tolerated in the land of Israel, yet all that worshipped the true God, though not belonging to their body, nor observing their particular rites, were to be treated by the Israelites with great kindness, as persons whom God himself accepted.

I had observed, that the peculiar constitution of the Jews was of great advantage for keeping up the knowledge and worship of the one true God in the world. This he treats as a mere imagination. For it is certain, that no other nation ever received the worship of one God from this nation; but they themselves were continually running into idolatry, and worshipping from time to time the gods of several other nations that conquered them, p. 60. It will be easily acknowledged, that they were often enticed to fall into a conformity to the vicious and idolatrous customs and practices of neighbouring nations; and that principally when peace and luxury had corrupted them. This was a fault, as they were circumstanced, great and inexcusable; but which is not extremely to be wondered at, considering the unaccountable proneness of mankind in all ages to idolatry, and to vice and sensuality, the usual attendants of the heathen worship. And this shows the wisdom of their peculiar constitution. For hence it was, that even in the times of their greatest degeneracy, there were still many persons among them who sincerely worshipped the only living and true God, free from idolatry, and made a right use of the advantages they enjoyed. And how far the knowledge of the true God might spread from them to other nations, is more than this writer can tell, notwithstanding all his confidence;* and the instances I produced, and which he has not thought fit to meddle with, render it highly probable. And it was certainly a signal advantage, that they were kept for so many ages a distinct polity, set apart to the worship and acknowledgment of the only true God, amongst whom the prophecies and promises, relating to the redeemer to come, were kept distinct, and the faith of his coming preserved, and the world prepared for a glorious and perfect dispensation that was to succeed. And though our author pretends, that when Christianity came to be preached, Judaism was the greatest obstacle to it; and that the miracles of Moses, as supposed to have proved his religion to be the true religion, prevented and obstructed the progress of Christianity more than the heathen idolatry did, pp. 60, 61. Yet it is certain, in fact, that the law and the prophets did make way for receiving and spreading of Christianity, and was a great advantage to it. And though the body of the Jewish nation, especially the chief priests and rulers, rejected our Lord Jesus Christ, and persecuted his disciples, yet the first harvest of converts to the Christian faith was among the Jews, and a greater number of them in proportion was converted to Christianity in that first age, than of any other nation whatsoever. Nor was any thing of

* See several letters, containing directions for the conduct of young persons; with an inquiry into natural and revealed religion. Letter vii.

greater advantage to Christianity, at its first promulgation, next to the extraordinary attestations with which it was accompanied, than this, that the Jews were then generally spread throughout the Roman empire; their Scriptures were everywhere known; they had proselyted vast numbers of the Gentiles from the worship of idols to the worship and acknowledgment of the true God; and among these the gospel was first preached, and made a great progress.

But this writer has another extraordinary attempt to show, that the peculiar polity of Moses answered no valuable purpose at all: he asserts, that it would not have cured the people of idolatry, even supposing they had kept his law. He owns, indeed, that Moses confined all worship and obedience to one true God; and that no doubt but he, and the prophets after him, had just notions enough of God, and of his spiritual divine perfections; but he indulged the gross vulgar or body of the people, in a sort of worship not much unlike to that of the heathen, local, and tutelar gods; and with the gross of the people, the God of Israel was a local tutelar God, p. 62. This he repeats on all occasions in his book. He boldly affirms, without disguise, that the God of Israel was an idol. That 'it is very evident from the whole story, that this people had a local, oracular, and tutelar God, who is called the God of Israel, as distinguished from the like residential Gods of Egypt, Philistia, Zidon, and other nations; and that this was the God for whom the priesthood was instituted, and to whom the sacrifices were offered, pp. 134, 135. That the God of Israel, who was supposed to reside in the sanctuary, in the custody of the high priest (as he is pleased to express it) was a mere cheat, and as much an idol as the tutelar, oracular, and residential gods of Egypt, and other nations,' p. 172. I must own this way of talking is to me very shocking. An author ought to be sure, to demonstration, that he is in the right, before he ventures to bring such a charge as this. For if it should prove to be the true God, whom he thus boldly arraigns and vilifies, it is no light guilt to be found reproaching the living God. And what is the proof that he brings to support this charge? it amounts chiefly to this; that 'God is represented as residing with the Ark upon the mercy-seat, between the cherubims, with a luminous glory about him, ready on all occasions to be consulted by the people, and give answers by an audible voice. And that when the Philistines took the ark, the priest, people, &c., were under a general consternation; they gave up their God for lost. The glory was departed from Israel: the enemy had robbed them of their God.'

I had sufficiently obviated this in the book which he pretends to answer; and had shown, that God's manifesting himself among the people of Israel, by a visible cloud of glory, and his giving answers on some occasions by an audible voice, was indeed a marvellous instance of goodness and condescension, but cannot be proved to have any thing in it absurd or unworthy of God, or inconsistent with his essential perfections. Nor doth it follow, that therefore he is a finite limited being, or that his essence is circumscribed, or confined to the place, where it pleaseth him thus peculiarly to manifest his

presence. Nor doth it appear that the Jews ever understood it so, who were everywhere taught in the law to form the noblest conceptions of the Deity, as the sovereign Lord of heaven and earth.* It is not to be wondered at, that when the ark was taken, they lamented that the glory was departed from Israel; for it was their peculiar glory that God had been pleased to enter into a special relation to them, and had vouchsafed them extraordinary tokens of his favour and presence: and his suffering the ark of the covenant to be taken by their enemies, which was the symbol of his special presence, and an external token of his covenant and particular relation to them, was a great instance of his displeasure, and must therefore give much concern to all good men among them. But they were far from thinking, that because the ark was taken, therefore the enemy had robbed them of their God; nor was this what they lamented, that Jehovah their God was taken, but that the ark of God was taken. Nor was any of them ever so senseless as to think, that when the temple was afterwards destroyed, their God was burnt in his own palace by the idolatrous Babylonians; this is our author's own reflection, p. 134, for the impiety and absurdity of which he alone is answerable: but the Jews were taught to entertain worthier and nobler notions of the Deity. In the same passage he seems to think it a sufficient proof, that the God that was worshipped among the Jews was not the true God, but an idol, or local residential deity, because sacrifices were offered to him. But this, if it proved any thing, would also prove, that the God whom the ancient patriarchs worshipped, and particularly Abraham, of whom this writer sometimes affects to speak with great veneration, as a sincere worshipper of the true God, was no more than an idol, or a local tutelar deity. Sacrifices were used in the divine worship from the earliest ages, and probably were of divine appointment, and instituted for wise purposes, as I have elsewhere shown.† And sufficient care was taken, by many express passages in the sacred writings, to prevent the Jews from forming such gross notions, concerning sacrifices, as this writer insinuates. See Psalm l. 9—13, and many other places to the same purpose.

But farther to show that God was regarded among the people of Israel as a local tutelar Deity, he produceth a passage from 2 Sam. vii. concerning David's purposing to build a house for the Lord to dwell in, 'which the prophet Nathan forbade, alleging that God had hitherto walked in a tent and tabernacle, &c. And that though he intended to have a better and more commodious house to dwell in than ever he had before, yet not David himself but his son Solomon was to have the honour of it,' pp. 63, 64. But certainly, no man that considers the sublime and admirable descriptions that David everywhere gives of the glory and majesty of the Lord Jehovah, as the sovereign Lord of the universe, and especially the noble representations he makes of the divine immensity

* See Divine Authority, pp. 41, 42.

† See Divine Authority, pp. 112, 117.—See also Answer to Christianity, &c. vol. i. pp. 67, 68, 69.

and omnipresence in the cxxxixth psalm, and which he gave to the chief musician to be employed in the public worship, can possibly suppose that when he purposed to build a house for the Lord to dwell in, he regarded him or designed that the people should regard him only as a topical God, like one of the heathen deities, whose presence was to be confined there. When Solomon made that excellent prayer at the consecration of the temple, he begins it with saying, 'I have surely built thee a house to dwell in, a settled place for thee to abide in for ever.' But that he was far from intending thereby to make such a mean representation of the Deity as this writer insinuates, is evident from those noble expressions uttered in the same prayer before all the people of Israel who were convened on that occasion; 'But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, the heaven, and the heaven of heavens, cannot contain Thee, how much less this house which I have builded?' 1 Kings viii. 13, 27. When Hezekiah addressed himself solemnly to God for protection against the invasion of Sennacherib, he begins his prayer thus, 'O Lord God of Israel, which dwellest between the cherubims!' But, must it be concluded from these words, that therefore he regarded him only as a national local Deity? The contrary is extremely evident, from what he immediately adds, 'Thou art the God, even Thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth; thou hast made heaven and earth.' And then he goes on to represent him as infinitely superior to all the idol-deities whom the heathens worshipped, 2 Kings xix. 15. It is plain, therefore, that those expressions, so usual among the Jews, concerning the house of God and his dwelling there, were not intended or understood by them as signifying, that the Lord Jehovah, whom they worshipped, was only a local residential Deity like the tutelar gods of other countries; or as if his presence was confined to the temple or tabernacle; but that it was his will that there they should offer up their solemn worship to him, and there he was pleased to vouchsafe special tokens of his gracious presence. The Syrians, indeed, agreeably to the notions they conceived of their own deities, supposed that the Hebrew gods might be gods of the hills, but not of the valleys, 1 Kings xx. 23, 28. And the idolatrous Samaritan nations, that were brought in the place of Israel, when the ten tribes were carried away captive by the king of Assyria, regarded the God whom the Israelites worshipped as the god of the land; and Rabshakeh, in his blasphemous speech, supposed the God of Israel was like the gods of Hamath, Arpad, Sepharvaim, &c. which were topical tutelar deities; but it is manifest that the Jews themselves were far from entertaining such notions of the Lord Jehovah, but rejected this with horror, as the highest blasphemy. See 2 Kings xviii. 34, 35, xix. 16—19.

Yet this writer has the confidence to say, that 'whoever will observe the language and style of the Hebrew historians all along, while they are accommodating themselves to the gross notions and superstitions of the common people, must see, that they speak of God as a national, local, and tutelar Deity; under which notion

the populace always conceived of him, and worshipped him. They worshipped him therefore only in name, while they had the same conceptions of him that the heathens had of their national idols or false gods. They could have no just notions or apprehensions of the infinite perfections, universal presence, and providential government of God, as the common father and friend of mankind, nor could they have borne any such representation of their peculiar idol or national god, but would have stoned the prophet who should have come to them with any such doctrine,' p. 64. I am so used to this author's way of representing things, that I am not surprised at this, or at any thing else that he advances, though ever so contrary to truth and decency. There is scarce any thing capable of a clearer proof than that the Jews, though they considered God as having made himself known to Israel in a particular manner, and as having entered into a special relation to them, yet did not regard him as a national, local, tutelar deity, as the heathens regarded their idols,* but as the Lord of the universe, the Creator and Governor of the world, the God of nature, who rules all things by his providence, and fills heaven and earth with his presence. It is undeniably evident that this is the idea under which he is continually represented throughout the whole Old Testament; in the law, in the prophets, in the psalms and sacred historical writings, and in all their acts of devotion, as there recorded, whether offered up by private persons, or offered publicly in the name of all the people. Their language is still entirely different from that of other nations, and from what it would have been if they had had the notions of God which this writer thinks fit to ascribe to them. I will not, indeed, answer for all the common people among the Jews, any more than I will for all the common people among the Christians, or in our own nation, that none of them ever entertained gross and unworthy notions of the Deity; but this I will say, that there was great care taken in their laws and other writings to prevent this, and inspire them with just and noble sentiments of the Supreme Being. Nor could they possibly regard God as a mere national idol or local deity, whilst they adhered to their laws, and were governed by them; and what notions they might entertain when they forsook their laws, and suffered themselves to be seduced into the idolatries of the neighbouring nations, is nothing to the purpose to inquire.

Our author next proceeds, p. 65, to say something about the

* It ought to be observed, that those that believe topical, local, tutelar deities, did universally believe that there were more gods than one. One nation, one city and country, had its local tutelar deity as well as another. And hence they had their forms of evocation, or persuading the tutelar gods of other countries to abandon the protections of them. But will any man pretend to say, that it was the notion and principle of the Jews, that there were many gods; or that the law or the prophets countenanced them in this notion? When, on the contrary, it is as clear as the light, that this is entirely contrary to the very fundamental constitution of the whole Jewish law and polity, in which nothing is more strongly inculcated than the unity of God, or that there is no other God but one, even the supreme Lord of the universe, who is alone to be acknowledged and adored.

miracles of Moses, to show that they were not really done, but only in appearance; and the poor stupid people were made to believe, they saw those things done before their eyes, though all was imposture and delusion. With regard to their passing through the Red Sea, he observes, that the people not knowing the way out of 'Egypt, might think there was no way of going out of it but through the sea;' and as they were conducted only by night, Moses made them believe, that the 'dry ground which they marched over was the bottom of the sea, which God had miraculously cleared of all the water-rocks and quick-sands,' &c. This, it must be owned, is very shrewdly conjectured. To which it should be added, that Moses, next morning, made them believe they saw the whole place through which they had passed, covered with the waves, though there was not one drop of water in the place; and that they saw the bodies of the Egyptians, who, it seems, had been drowned on dry land, floating on the waters, and their chariots, &c. cast upon the shore. With regard to the promulgation of the law at Sinai, he will have it, that the people heard nothing more than the voice of thunder, which they could not articulate, that is, they heard no words or articulate voice at all; and yet Moses made that whole vast multitude believe they heard the voice of God, out of the midst of the fire, distinctly pronouncing the ten commandments, when they heard no such thing; and appeals to themselves concerning it, as a thing they all knew, and the like of which no other nation had ever heard or seen from the foundation of the world. See Deut. iv. 32, 33, v. 4, 22. Our author next tries his hand upon the miracle of bringing water out of the rock, by Moses's striking it with his rod. And this he most ingeniously accounts for; 'this people had never seen any fresh-water springs in Egypt, and therefore seeing water flow out of a rock, must at first appear as wonderful to them as drying up the sea,' &c. The water, it seems, had been there all along. It had come flowing from the rock, and had passed by their tents; but the poor senseless creatures could not see it, though they were, at that very time, ready to perish for want of it. And when he brought them to the rock, he made them believe there was not one drop of water issuing out of it till he struck it with his rod, though it was all the while gushing out in great abundance, a rapid spring before their eyes. To attempt a serious answer to such wild suppositions, would be to render myself as ridiculous as this writer; and he must suppose these nations to be as senseless as he makes the Israelites to be, if he imagines such stuff as this can pass upon them. It were to be wished he had gone through the other miracles, which he might easily have done in the same way. He might have shown, that Moses made above a million of people believe that the manna fell about their tents constantly six days in the week, and that they themselves gathered it, and fed upon it all along for forty years together, in the barren desert, when there was no such thing. But, it seems, there is one way of accounting for all this, and that is, the great stupidity of the Israelites, against which he inveighs on

all occasions. But it is not sufficient to suppose them very ignorant and stupid, except he can prove them quite senseless, that they could neither see, nor hear, nor feel, nor understand. They were, it seems, a race of creatures, that happened some way or other to have the human shape, but they had nothing else belonging to men; and thus continued throughout all their generations. And yet the wonder is, that this strange people, as appears from all their remaining monuments, had far juster notions of religion than those that passed for the most polite and learned nations upon earth; and numbers, even of the common people among them, except in the times when they themselves were drawn from the observation of their own laws to a compliance with the opinions and customs of the neighbouring nations, had far nobler notions of the only living and true God, and of the worship due to him, in opposition to all idolatry, not only than the common people even of Greece and Rome, but than many of their wise men and philosophers themselves.

But our author has got one instance, which he produces as a 'proof of their more than brutish stupidity; and from whence we must conclude them more brutish than their cattle, and not endued with any common sense or human faculties,' pp. 27, 67. And that is, their worshipping 'the golden calf so soon after the extraordinary promulgation of the law.' I will agree, that this was a strange instance of stupidity and guilt, and so I look upon all idolatry to be, though it is a folly the wisest nations have been guilty of. But this writer thinks proper, by his representation of it, to make this matter worse than it really was, though it was bad enough. He represents them as ascribing their deliverance to the gods of Egypt. But this is far from being true. It was the God of Israel, and not the Egyptian deities, they intended to worship by this symbol. They said, These be thy gods, O Israel, or as it might very properly be rendered, this is thy God, O Israel, (for it is well known that the word Elohim, there made use of, though plural in construction, is often singular in its signification, see Gen. xx. 12, xxxv. 7, and is so used in the present case, Nehem. ix. 18,) which brought thee out of the land of Egypt. And this is the character under which God had described himself when he gave the ten commandments. And accordingly we find Aaron, when he proclaimed a feast on that occasion, proclaimed a feast to the Lord, to Jehovah, Exod. xxxii. 5; from whence it appears, that it was God Jehovah they intended to worship, though they took a wrong way of doing it. Moses had been absent from them above a month. They could not tell what was become of him, and probably thought he was consumed by the fire, or taken up into heaven, and would not return to them any more. They were weary of continuing any longer in that station at Sinai, and wanted to be going forward, but they had a mind to have a visible symbol of the divine presence with them, a visible representation of the Deity. And people, even those that have passed for learned and wise, have been very ingenious in all ages, in finding out plausible colours and pretences

to justify this. If it be urged, that this had been so expressly forbidden, just before in the second commandment, delivered with the most awful solemnity, that it can scarce be conceived that they should be guilty of it; or, if so, they must have been stupid beyond the common race of human nature: I answer, that without supposing them uncommonly stupid, they might be ready to argue, that when they were forbidden to worship any image, or the likeness of any thing, &c. this related only to their worshipping the false gods and idols of other countries, but that there was no hurt in worshipping the true God by an image or symbolical representation. This is the explication that has been actually given of the design of the second commandment by some of the church of Rome, and those persons of learning and sagacity too. And what reason can be given why the Israelites might not understand it so, and think it a sufficient justification or excuse, that it was not the worshipping a false god they intended, but the worshipping the true God under that symbol? And, at that rate, it was not owing to an excess of stupidity, but to their subtly explaining away the true design of this commandment in favour of their own prejudices, and according to a way of thinking that then generally prevailed. And as to the particular symbol they chose, that of an ox, several symbolical reasons might be given for it, according to the wisdom that then obtained. But there is no proof that the Egyptian Apis or Serapis were so ancient; and the rites the Israelites made use of on this occasion, viz. the sacrificing of oxen, was no way agreeable to the rites made use of by the Egyptians in honour of that idol.*

Our author, after having made this extraordinary attempt to account for the miracles of Moses, next proceeds to blame me 'for supposing a thing that cannot be proved; and that is, that this account was written by Moses himself, and was as firmly believed then as it was in after ages,' p. 68. I observed, in my former book, that we have as full a proof of this as can reasonably be desired, or as we can have, that any book was written by any author under whose name it goes. For we have the constant testimony of the whole nation to whom these laws were given, and who regarded them with great veneration, as the rule of their polity. And all other nations that had occasion to mention them, still ascribed these writings to Moses. None; either among friends or enemies, among those who lived nearest those times, ever pretended to deny it. There is a constant reference to these books as written by Moses, in all the succeeding records and monuments of their nation; and finally, which ought to have a mighty influence upon us Christians, they are all along ascribed to Moses in the New Testament by our Saviour and his apostles. Nor was this ever pretended to be contested, but by a few in these later times, who come too late, and whose objections are too weak and trifling, to disturb an uninterrupted possession of so many ages.

* See Dr. Tennison, on Idolatry, chap. vi. part 3, 4.

But he urges, 'that it does not appear that Moses wrote any thing himself but the original book of the law, which was to be kept with the ark, and never to be read by any but the priest who was to officiate,' p. 69. Here then we have this writer's own concession, that Moses himself wrote the original book of the law, which was deposited in the side of the ark. And this certainly was a very wise provision, by virtue of which there was always an authentic original kept safe in the most sacred place, to which recourse might be had, and by which all other copies of the law might be adjusted and corrected. But it certainly never was the design of Moses, as this writer seems here to insinuate, that there should be no copy taken of the law at all besides the original one, and that it was to be kept wholly in the hands of the priest. It was expressly appointed by Moses, that the king should write a copy with his own hand, which, for the greater correctness, was to be taken from the authentic original; and he was 'to read therein all the days of his life,' Deut. xviii. 18, 19. And it is certain that Moses urged it in the strongest manner upon all the people as their indispensable duty, to meditate on the law themselves, and to teach it diligently to their children, and to make it the daily subject of their thoughts and conversation, Deut. iv. 9--6, vi. 9, xi. 19, which evidently supposed that the law was not to be confined in the hands of the priests and governors, but that all the people were to be acquainted with it. One design of instituting the Sabbath, was to give the people leisure for this. And one whole tribe, that of Levi, was set apart to assist the people in the knowledge of that law, and was for that purpose dispersed through all their tribes, Lev. x. 2. Deut. xxxiii. 10. It was looked upon as the proper character of a good man, who was entitled to the divine blessing, that 'his delight was in the law of the Lord, and in that law did he meditate day and night,' Ps. i. 1, 2. With regard to Moses himself, we are expressly told that 'he wrote this law, and delivered it unto the priests, the sons of Levi, which bear the ark of the covenant of the Lord, and unto all the elders of Israel,' Deut. xxxi. 9. From which words the Jews very reasonably conclude, that as he delivered an original copy, written with his own hand, to the priests, to be deposited in the sides of the ark, of which we have an account, ver. 24, 25, so he at the same time delivered written copies of the law to the elders of the several tribes, to be by them carefully preserved.

If the question be what we are to understand by the book of the law which Moses wrote and delivered, I think it may be reasonably concluded, that if he gave them the law at all, he gave them the whole of that law, since they were strictly enjoined to observe all things that were there prescribed, and neither to add to it, nor diminish from it. And consequently, the law he gave them in writing to be preserved, could not be merely the book of Deuteronomy, as some have imagined; because, though this contains a recapitulation of the principal laws and extraordinary miraculous facts, for the truth of which he appeals to the whole body of the people who had been eye and ear-witnesses, yet there are several

laws and directions which they were carefully to observe, which yet are not to be found there, but in the book of Leviticus and of Numbers.

And if Moses himself committed his laws to writing, he also wrote an account of the extraordinary facts whereby those laws were attested, since this was as necessary as the other; and indeed the law of Moses is a perpetual intermixture of laws and facts. They are so interwoven, that in the one there is a perpetual reference to the other; and they cannot be separated. Those facts contained the proofs of the divine original of the law; many of the laws themselves were designed and intended on purpose to keep up the remembrance of those facts; and Moses himself frequently inculcates it upon the people to consider those facts and to teach them to their children. And accordingly the knowledge of the laws and facts went still together, and was alike preserved among that people throughout their generations, Psalm lxxviii. 5, 6, 7, and constantly referred to in all their monuments as things universally known and acknowledged among them. We are expressly told, Numb. xxxiii. 1, 2, 'that Moses, by the command of God, wrote down the journeyings of the children of Israel, which went forth out of the land of Egypt, under the hand of Moses and Aaron.' And if he was ordered to write an account of their journeyings out of Egypt, and in the wilderness, much more of the wonderful things that befel them, that the remembrance of those things might be preserved throughout all their generations. And as the law was that for the illustration and confirmation of which all the rest was written, the whole might well be called 'the book of the law.' So we find the apostle Paul, citing a passage out of Genesis, calls it 'the law,' Gal. iv. 21, 22. And reference is made to some things as written in the law, that are only to be found written in the books of Exodus and Numbers.*

Our author has little to offer, that has any appearance of reason or argument, to prove that Moses was not the author of the books under his name. He first amuses the reader with some general talk about the 'alterations and additions that the biblical books have undergone.' He observes, that 'the book of Nehemiah brings down the genealogy of the high priests to the time of Jaddua, who, according to Josephus, was contemporary with Alexander the Great.' But supposing Josephus to have been mistaken, and that Jaddua was not contemporary with Alexander the Great, then our author's reflection falls. Now this is what Sir Isaac Newton supposes to be the case. The chronology of Josephus, particularly with regard to the times of the Persian empire, is known to be very confused. He confounds Darius Nothus, in whose reign Jaddua lived, with the last Darius that was overcome by Alexander, and this led him to make Jaddua contemporary with Alexander the Great, or to call the high-priest that then lived Jaddua.† But even

* See Chron. xvi. 40, and 2 Chron. xxxi. 3, compared with Exodus xxix. 28. Numbers xxviii. xxix.

† See Chronology of Ancient Kingdoms amended, chap. vi.

allowing our author's own supposition, all that would follow from it would be only this, that in the list of the high-priests, Nehem. xii. 10, &c. the name of a high priest or two was afterwards inserted by other persons, probably the men of the great synagogue, who revised the sacred books,* to make the catalogue of the high-priests complete, and bring it down to their own times. But this doth not touch the authority of that book, nor prove that Nehemiah was not the author of it, which it appears, from the whole strain of it, he manifestly was. He next observes, that 'the books of Daniel and Esther were written pretty long after the captivity, and pretty low down in the Persian empire.' This is not true of the book of Daniel, which was written by Daniel himself, in the very beginning of that empire. The book of Esther was indeed written afterwards, and no wonder, since it contains an historical narration of what happened lower down in the Persian empire. He farther assures us, that 'there are several passages, and whole chapters in Isaiah, that must have been written after the Babylonish captivity;' that is, many years after Isaiah was dead. And this he asserted with as much confidence as if he could really prove it. The reason he gives is pleasant enough. 'They relate to the state and circumstances of the people at that time;' that is, because they prophesy of what was to happen to the people at and after the time of the Babylonish captivity, therefore they were written after that time. All that can be gathered from this is, that in our author's opinion, all prophecies are written after the event; but this will hardly pass with others for an argument. He next very pertinently observes, that 'the book of Psalms is a collection of poems and songs, composed by several hands, at great distances of time;' and that one of them, viz. xcth Psalm, was composed by Moses. And what this is brought to prove is hard to say. 'The second book of Samuel brings down the history above forty years after the death of that prophet, and the last ten chapters of the first book relate to things that were done after the death of Samuel.' And what follows from thence? That Samuel did not write the last ten chapters of the first book, nor any part of the second. And who supposes that he did? According to the Jews, he wrote the former part of the first book; and the remainder of that book, and all the second book, were written by Gad and Nathan, the prophets; which they gather from what is said, 1 Chron. xxix. 29. And the whole, when compiled together, might be called by the name of Samuel, because he was the most eminent person of the three, and his acts were recorded in the first place.

All this is nothing to Moses; but at last he comes to produce a proof, that the books of Moses were not written by him; and the proof relates only to a passage in the book of Genesis, chap. xxxvi. 'where we have an exact list of all the kings and dukes of Edom, before there was any king in Israel, which therefore was wrote when there was a king in Israel, and consequently could not have been earlier than the time of Samuel and Saul,' p. 69.

* Concerning this, see Prid. Connect. part I. at the end of book VIII.

But if it should be granted, that to the account Moses had given of Esau and his posterity was afterwards added by some other person, perhaps by Samuel, a list of the kings of Edom, down to his time, to make the account complete, it would not follow that therefore Moses did not write those books, or that there is any corruption or alteration made in the laws or facts. This insertion has nothing to do, either with the laws as delivered by Moses, or with the accounts of the facts whereby those laws were attested, both which were written by Moses, and kept with the utmost veneration. Nor would any succeeding writer pretend to corrupt or change them; or if they had attempted it, must soon have been detected. And I have elsewhere shown, that there are no corruptions or alterations made, in those instances in which it might be expected that they would have altered the original records, if they durst have corrupted them at all.* But after all, it doth not appear that the passage the author refers to was inserted after the time of Moses, nor can any sufficient argument be brought to prove, that it was not written by Moses himself. It is indeed observed in that passage, that the kings there mentioned 'reigned in the land of Edom, before there reigned any king over the children of Israel,' Gen. xxxvi. 31. From whence our author concludes, that 'it must have been written when there was a king in Israel;' but this doth not necessarily follow: these expressions may be designed barely to signify, that the posterity of Esau had had so many kings as are there mentioned before the time in which Moses wrote; whereas Israel had had no king hitherto; though he knew they would have kings in after-times, as is plain from what he saith, Deut. xvii. 14, 19.

But if it should be granted, that these words suppose that at the time of writing this, there was a king over the children of Israel, it could not be concluded from thence that Moses did not write it; for he is expressly said to have been 'king in Jeshurun,' or Israel, in the blessing which he himself pronounced upon the tribes, Deut. xxxiii. 5. And that he was really so, and had a regal power, the learned Selden proves at large, *De Synedr. lib. ii. cap. 1, 2.* And in this view, the design of these expressions would only be to signify, that there were so many kings in Edom before Moses ruled the Israelites, who had never been governed by a single person before. If it be urged, that there is not space enough for so many kings in Edom before Moses' time, I answer, that from Esau's marriage to Moses' death, there were no less than 345 years. And here there is room enough, both for the first race of dukes of the children of Esau, mentioned ver. 15—19, and who were all contemporary, and may well be reckoned within the first hundred years after Esau's marriage, and after them for the eight kings, mentioned ver. 31—39. For the reigns of kings, according to Sir Isaac Newton's computation, may be reckoned at a medium, one with another, at eighteen or twenty years apiece;† but let us reckon the

* See Answer to Christianity, &c. vol ii. pp. 139, 140.

† See his Chronology of ancient Kingdoms amended, chap. i.

kings of Edom at twenty-two years and a half, one with another, they will be comprehended within 180 years; and at that rate there will be about sixty-five years still remaining between the last of the kings there mentioned and the death of Moses; which is space enough for the dukes that are mentioned after the kings, ver. 40, and who probably were all contemporary. And the Edomites, who seem to have been under the government of dukes when Israel went out of Egypt, *Exod. xv. 15*, returned under the government of kings a little before the death of Moses; for we find there was a king of Edom at the time when Israel demanded a passage through their land, which was the last year of Moses' life. There is nothing in all this but what is very consistent; and so this mighty argument of our author's, to prove that Moses was not the author of the Pentateuch, falls to the ground.

He next inveighs, pp. 70, 71, against the miracles of Moses, as he had done several times before, because of the destruction brought on the Egyptians and Canaanites: but this hath been already considered and obviated above. And after pronouncing these accounts of things to be the 'most incredible fiction and forgery that ever was invented;' and that it is 'contrary to all reason and common sense' to look upon those historians as having been divinely inspired, he declares, that for his part, he 'is sure that this miraculously stupid people were always inspired and possessed with the spirit of the devil. And it is both a matter of grief and wonder, that they should be able thus to transfuse their spirit and faith into Christians,' p. 72, that is, that both the Jews, all along, in all their generations, and all Christians that have believed that those accounts are true, and that the sacred Hebrew writers were divinely inspired (and it is certain, that our Saviour, and his apostles, and the body of Christians, have considered them in this view), have been 'inspired and possessed with the spirit of the devil.' This may give us a true specimen of the temper of this writer. Many will be apt to think, that in describing the spirit of the Jews, he has plainly discovered his own: and that he has drawn his own character in stronger terms, than any of his adversaries would have done it for him.

He farther objects against Moses, as guilty of imposture, 'in trumping up the Abrahamic covenant to the people of Israel, or 'pretending to any right or claim from thence;' as if it was in accomplishment of the promise made to Abraham, that they were to be delivered out of Egypt, and brought to Canaan. He urges, that 'this must have been without the least ground or foundation;' because the covenant God made with Abraham, concerning his posterity possessing the land of Canaan within 400 years was conditional: and the terms of that covenant had never been complied with, and all right and claim from it had been forfeited long before the days of Moses: which he proves, because 'they had run into all the idolatry and superstition of Egypt,' &c. p. 72. But it doth not appear, that their possessing the land of Canaan was suspended on the condition of their persisting without any inter-

ruption in the pure profession and practice of the true religion ; so that any failure in their obedience was an entire forfeiture of their right and interest in that covenant ; and that even though they should afterwards repent and return, they were to have no benefit by it. Besides the passage the author refers to, Gen. xv. 13—16, contains not merely a conditional promise, but a plain and absolute prediction of what should certainly come to pass. It is there expressly declared and foretold to Abraham, that his seed should be strangers in a land that was not theirs, and should serve another nation, and be in an afflicted state ; and that at the end of 400 years, they should come out with great substance, and come to the land of Canaan. Moses might therefore justly put the Israelites in mind of the promise made to Abraham, since the time prefixed for the accomplishment of it was now come. It was indeed proper, in order to their having the benefit of it, that they should solemnly engage to take ‘the Lord for their God,’ and walk in obedience to his laws. And this they did engage to do ; and upon their frequent rebellions and revoltings that generation fell in the wilderness ; and their children, who were not involved in their corruptions and idolatries, had the benefit of it.

But he farther urges, p. 73, that the ‘plan which Moses laid, or the method which he had concerted, to make himself master of the country, was absolutely inconsistent with the nature and conditions of the Abrahamic covenant.’ How is this proved ? It should have been by converting the Canaanites, and not in a way of bloodshed and violence. But all that was promised in the covenant made with Abraham, was, that his seed should have the land of Canaan for a possession. The particular manner, in which they were to be put in possession of it, is not told. But the reason of their not being to possess that land, till after 400 years, is declared to be this, that the iniquities of the Amorites were not yet full, Gen. xv. 16. This plainly implies, that when their wickedness should be arrived to the greatest height, then, and not till then, should that promise of putting the Israelites in possession of that land be accomplished. And, consequently, it is plainly intimated, that it was to be done by dispossessing the Canaanites in a way of exemplary vengeance upon them for their crimes ; which this writer, who presumes to direct divine providence, in the way of dealing with guilty nations, calls ‘unnatural cruelty, violence and outrages.’ But, it seems, ‘Abraham might easily have possessed himself of the country by force of arms, if he had thought this a just and proper method ; and so might Joseph have done after him, when he was prime minister in Egypt,’ pp. 73, 74. But since Abraham was assured, that his seed should be strangers and afflicted in a foreign land, and not possess the land of Canaan till after 400 years, it may be presumed, that he was willing to wait the appointed time ; and to have attempted it before, would have been no way suitable to Abraham’s character, or to the faith for which he was so renowned. And the same may be said with regard to Joseph, who made no doubt of the accom-

plishment of that promise, as appears from Gen. 1. 24, 25, but knew that the time for it was not yet come.

Our author, after some farther invectives against Moses and the Israelites, for invading the Canaanites, and for plundering and destroying the Midianites, who were punished in an exemplary manner by the divine command, for enticing the Israelites to idolatry and vice; would fain offer something for vindicating his little sneer concerning Judah's not being able to drive out the inhabitants of the valleys who had chariots of iron, 'because the Lord never enabled the Israelites as infantry to stand before the Canaanites' horse.' He represents the answer I had given to this in his own way; but as he is pleased wisely to pass over the express proofs I had brought, to show the falsehood of the reason he had assigned,* I need not take any further notice of it.

He had, in his former book, insinuated, as if the promise made to Abraham, concerning the Israelites coming to Canaan in 400 years, was not accomplished, because they were not immediately at their first entrance into the land of Canaan put in possession of the whole country at its full extent. To which it was answered, that it is nowhere absolutely promised, that they should be immediately put into possession of the whole land at once. The time of 400 years was fixed for their coming again to the land of Canaan, Gen. xv. 16, but no time is fixed for their being put into entire possession of the whole country. And I observed, that it is most expressly again and again declared and foretold, that God would not drive out the Canaanites from before them 'all at once,' but 'by little and little.' To which this author answers, that 'God had never declared this, till Moses himself had found, and was convinced by experience, that they could not be driven out altogether, and that the Israelites had not strength enough,' pp. 75, 76. But it happens unluckily for him, that this was declared soon after the Israelites came to Sinai, a considerable time before the spies were sent to explore the land, and before it could be pretended that the Israelites had any experience of the strength of the Canaanites, see Exod. xxiii. 29—31. But, however, 'he is sure, that the reason which the historian gives for this, could not be God's reason, that he would not drive them out altogether, lest the land should become desolate, and the beasts of the field should multiply against them.' He thinks the people must have amounted to 'between three and four millions of men, women and children; and it is wonderful, that they should not be sufficient to stock and inhabit a country, not a fourth part so big as England, as this country was not in its full extent, had they conquered it all. And yet a land thus stocked with inhabitants must have been more populous than England, Holland, or any other part of Europe, at this day, p. 75. But it happens, that in this passage, where those words are to be found which the author here refers to, the land assigned to the Israelites, and which was to be delivered into their hands, was of a

* See Divine Authority, pp. 46, 47.

vastly larger extent than all England; for it is represented as reaching 'from the Red Sea even unto the sea of the Philistines, and from the desert unto the river, viz. Euphrates; all this was comprehended in the grant,* though not fully possessed till the time of David and Solomon. And with regard to the land of Canaan, properly so called, it must be considered that it was a hilly country; and such a country has much more room in it than a plain country of the same extent. And, in fact, we find that great numbers of the Canaanites continued to inhabit many parts of the land for a considerable time after the first entrance of the Israelites into it. And since they and the Canaanites together did no more than fill the land, if the Canaanites had been utterly destroyed at once, some parts of it might have been left desolate, and the beasts might have been multiplied upon them; especially considering that this land was surrounded with great deserts and wildernesses, as well as full of hills and mountains. And, accordingly, long after this, when the people of Israel were much more in number than they were at their first entrance into the land of Canaan, that country was frequently infested with wild beasts, as may be gathered from several instances.

CHAPTER V.

The testimony given by St. Paul to the Divine inspiration of the Scriptures of the Old Testament vindicated against the author's exceptions. The apostle recommended those sacred writings as of divine authority to the churches which he founded among the Gentiles. He regarded the law of Moses as having been originally of divine institution, though he knew by revelation it was no longer to be in force under the gospel. Objections against this obviated. The typical reference of that law vindicated. His attempt to prove that St. Paul was not the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, considered.

THE author, in his former book, had undertaken to show, that the law of 'Moses was not originally a divine institution or revelation from God, to be afterwards abolished and set aside by another revelation, but was a mere piece of carnal worldly policy.' And what was more extraordinary, he declared, that if he 'could not make it appear that St. Paul was on his side, he would give up the argument.' In opposition to this I showed, by the most express testimonies, that the apostle Paul did look upon the law of Moses to have been originally a divine institution or revelation from God. One passage I produced to that purpose was

* See Deut. xi. 22, 23, 24. Jos. i. 3, 4, 5.

that remarkable one to Timothy, where he commends him, for that from 'a child he had known the Holy Scriptures,' and declares, that they were 'able to make him wise unto salvation.' And then adds that all Scripture (or the whole Scripture) 'is given by inspiration of God,' &c. I observed, that by the Holy Scriptures he incontestably refers to the writings of the Old Testament, viz. those of Moses and the Prophets. Now what does our author say to this? Can he deny that the Scriptures there referred to are the writings of Moses and the Prophets? He cannot deny this. But he would have it, that by all Scripture the apostle only means the moral precepts of Scripture, p. 79. And at this rate any writing in the world, that has any good moral precepts in it, though mixed with many things that are false and of a pernicious tendency, and containing a 'scheme of superstition and enthusiasm, contrary to all reason and common sense, falsely set up under the popular pretence of a divine institution or revelation from God,' which is the idea he is pleased to give us of the Old Testament writings, may be safely recommended, and pronounced to be divine, and given by inspiration from God. But whether this be consistent with common honesty, may be left to the judgment of every reader. And, I am persuaded, that even this writer himself, though none of the most scrupulous, yet in the notions he now hath of the Jewish Scriptures, would not recommend them to mankind under that general character, which he here pretends the apostle gave of them, who, he would make us believe, had the same notions of them with himself: and yet he confidently puts it upon his reader, that 'St. Paul's principles and practice are perfectly consistent in his scheme,' and that he 'cannot be charged with anything of artifice or prevarication,' p. 92.

But he urges, that when the apostle Paul here talks of the Holy Scriptures, and recommends them as written by inspiration of God, he could not understand it of the whole Scripture in gross, or of every 'thing that the Jews had received as authentic Scripture: because this would be to make him assert a thing contrary to all truth, sense, and reason,' p. 80. All that I can make of the argument is this, that because this author looks upon it to be absurd to hold all the Scripture to be divinely inspired, therefore the apostle Paul did not and could not hold it to be divinely inspired, though he plainly represents it in that view. But it is urged, that he could not mean the bare historical parts of Scripture, nor could he mean that part of those writings which relate to the ordinances of the ceremonial law, which this apostle every where condemns and explodes. As to the ceremonial law, it has been shown, that St. Paul all along supposes and asserts it to have been originally of divine institution, designed to be preparatory to the gospel, and subservient to it.* Nor hath this writer been able to answer the clear proofs that were brought for that. And, indeed, it would be a strange thing to suppose, that when the apostle gives this noble cha-

* See Divine Authority, pp. 48, 49, 52—57.

racter of the Scriptures in general, he should have no regard to the writings of Moses, which made so eminent a part of those Scriptures. As to the historical parts of Scripture, though this writer seems to think it absurd to suppose that they could be profitable for correction or instruction in righteousness, &c. yet it is certain, the apostle Paul did not think so. He represents the historical parts of Scripture as written for our admonition, and for our learning, see 1 Cor. x. 6—11, compared with Rom. xv. 4. And he frequently refers to the historical books of the Old Testament, under the notion of Scripture. Thus we find him referring to some historical passages in the book of Genesis, Rom. iv. 3: Gal. iii. 8; iv. 30. And to an historical passage in the book of Exodus, Rom. ix. 16; and to another in the first book of Kings xi. 2, 3, 4. All these he evidently cites and refers to as Scripture, and as of divine authority.*

But our author urges, that the historical writings, which the Jews received as authentic Scripture, 'abound with many mistakes and inconsistencies in history and chronology.' This is the notion he has of them: but the question is, whether this was also the notion the apostle Paul entertained of them. And, I am persuaded, if this had been the case, he would not have given so glorious a character of the Holy Scriptures in general without distinction, as he does, in this passage, and which must necessarily have been understood by Timothy, and all others in that age, as relating to the sacred writings of the Old Testament in general. I am very little concerned about the author's charge of inconsistencies; when he produces them, they may be considered. Though if it should be admitted, that some mistakes, with regard to names, numeral letters, computations of years, and other matters of small consequence, have in process of time crept into those original writings, through the mistake or negligence of transcribers, it would not destroy the authority of those writings, or show that the original authors of them were not divinely inspired.

He next goes into a digression, pp. 80, 81, concerning inspiration, the design of which is to show, that no more regard is to be had to

* It is evident to any one that impartially reads the historical writings of the Old Testament, that the main design of them is not merely to gratify a curiosity, but to beget and maintain in the minds of the people a veneration for the Supreme Being, a detestation of vice and idolatry, a dread of his justice, and a thankful sense of his great goodness, by letting them know how they and their rulers prospered, when they adhered to the worship of God, and the practice of righteousness; and, on the contrary, what calamities befel them, when they fell into idolatry and wickedness. These are the important lessons which the sacred historical writings are designed to convey to posterity. All things there are made subservient to the great ends of religion: and in this they are gloriously distinguished from all other historical writings. This author, indeed, represents the 'Hebrew historians as every where discovering a visible and strong prejudice and prepossession in favour of their own nation,' p. 28. But the contrary is evident. If the wonderful actings of divine providence for them are recorded, so also are the ungrateful returns they frequently made to the divine goodness. The follies, the idolatries and revolts of their own people, and the faults even of their greatest and most admired good men and heroes, are related without any arts of palliation or disguise, with a fairness, a simplicity, and impartiality that cannot be sufficiently admired.

what comes by extraordinary inspiration, or is confirmed by miracles, than if it had come only in the ordinary way. What he offers here to this purpose hath been already considered; see above p. 343, and pp. 364, 365, &c. At present I shall only observe, that whatever this writer's way of thinking may be, which is of little importance to the world, he should not pretend to put this upon us as the apostle Paul's sentiment; or as if it was his opinion too, that divine inspiration is of no authority at all, and no more to be depended on than if there had been no inspiration; and as if by saying, that the Scriptures are given by inspiration of God, he intended that they are no more to be regarded than any common writings that do not pretend to be written by inspiration at all. But it is urged, that 'under that extraordinary dispensation of the Spirit, men were not to receive and believe every spirit, or every matter of inspiration, but to try the spirits or doctrines of inspiration, whether they were of God, or not.' But does it follow, that they were to have no regard to true inspiration, because they were to take care not to be deceived or imposed upon by falsely pretended ones? When Christians are commanded in the New Testament to try the spirits, it is evident that this is not designed to derogate from the authority of the Scriptures, since one test, by which they were to try them, was their agreeing with the Holy Scriptures. So the Bereans tried the doctrines of the apostles by the Scriptures, and are commended for it, Acts xvii. 11, 12. And another test, whereby they were to try the spirits in that first age, was their agreeing with the doctrine of Christ and his apostles. Hence they are commanded to mark those which taught 'things contrary to the doctrines which they had learned, and to avoid them,' Rom. xvi. 17. And St. Paul earnestly exhorts the Galatians not to receive any doctrine different from what he had taught them. And why were they so firmly to adhere to the gospel he had taught them? Because it was what he himself had received by revelation from Jesus Christ, Gal. i. 8, 9, 11, 12, and which was confirmed by the most illustrious attestations and gifts of the Holy Spirit, chap. iii. 2, 5.

This writer next takes notice of a passage, produced by me, from Rom. iii. 1, 2, where St. Paul calls the writings of the Old Testament, of which the law of Moses was a principal part, the oracles of God: and they are expressly called so by St. Stephen, Acts vii. 38. He has nothing to say to this, but the old story over again, that the apostle could not mean the law of Moses, because he calls its ordinances carnal ordinances, beggarly elements, &c. And this he frequently repeats in this book, though he knows I had proved fully and distinctly, that the apostle did not, and could not, in consistency with himself, intend by those expressions to signify that the law of Moses was not originally of divine institution. Yea, and that he supposes and asserts the contrary, in those very places where he makes use of that manner of expression. He has not thought fit to offer the least answer to the proofs that were brought

for this;* and yet repeats what he had said before as securely, as if no notice had been taken of it at all. His following loose harangue, about evils coming from God, as well as good, &c. hath already been considered in the marginal note, pp. 58, 59, to which I refer the reader.

In pp. 83, 84, he charges me as 'discovering a great deal of artifice and prevarication, but nothing at all of truth and reason;' because I say, that 'it cannot be denied that St. Paul, in all his epistles, cites the Mosaical and prophetic writings as of divine authority, and that he delivered those writings to all the churches of the Gentiles among whom he preached, and whom he instructed in the Christian religion, under the notion of Scripture, or divinely inspired writings.' He says, that 'the apostle always argues from the authority of Moses and the prophets against the Jews, but that he never so much as quotes them but to the Jews, where he found them dispersed among the Gentiles, and that the Jewish or Judaizing teachers had been tampering with the Gentiles before, and had furnished them with those writings.' Now the contrary to what this writer here so confidently affirms may be proved with great evidence. And it might seem a trifling thing to attempt to prove a thing so well known, if this author's denying it did not make it necessary.

The epistle to the Romans was principally directed to the Gentiles, see chap. i. 13. And it appears that there were many among them that well understood their Christian liberty, and whom he thought it necessary to urge not to despise the Jewish converts, chap. xiv. 1, 2, 3, 5, 15. And yet he cites the Scriptures all along as of divine authority, not merely in those parts where he is disputing with the Jews, but where he is applying to the Gentiles, chaps. xiv. xv. And in the conclusion of that epistle, speaking of the gospel mystery which was then made manifest, he saith that by 'the Scripture of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God it was made known to all nations, for the obedience of faith,' chap. xvi. 26. I do not think there can be a clearer proof of what this writer with so much confidence denies, that the Scriptures of the Old Testament were recommended by the apostle to the Gentiles, and represented by him as of divine authority. In his Epistle to the Ephesians, who were a church consisting of Gentile converts, and whom he addresses to, and considers entirely as such, Eph. ii. 1, 2, 11, 12, he declares to them, that they were 'built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone,' ver. 20; see also Eph. iv. 8, vi. 2. The Corinthians were a church gathered from the Gentiles, and from his first epistle to them it appears that they understood their Christian liberty, and were rather in danger of carrying it to an excess than the contrary. Nor is there any thing at all in that epistle relating to the controversy of those times between the Judaizing teachers and the apostle Paul; and yet he

* See 'Divine Authority,' pp. 53, &c.

frequently, on all occasions, cites the Old Testament writings to them as Scripture, and as of divine authority, see 1 Cor. ii. 9, ix. 8, 9, 10, x. 11, xiv. 21. See also in his second epistle, 2 Cor. iv. 13, vi. 2, 16, 17, 18, vii. 1, viii. 15, ix. 9. And even to Timothy, his fellow-labourer, and whom this writer supposes to have been of the same sentiments with himself, he all along quotes the Scriptures as of divine authority, 1 Tim. v. 18, 2 Tim. iii. 14—18. And where he exhorts him to 'continue in the things he had learned and been assured of,' he recommends the 'Holy Scriptures' to him 'as able to make us wise unto salvation,' as given 'by inspiration of God,' and as fitted to make the 'man of God perfect,' i. e. one that was fit to instruct others in religion. And now can it possibly be thought that this great apostle would have acted at this rate, if he had not looked upon the writings of the Old Testament to be divinely inspired, but written by persons falsely pretending to inspiration, and containing many things that were false and superstitious, and only dispersed among the Gentiles by the Jewish teachers, his adversaries? Would not a man of his sincerity and zeal have faithfully warned the churches among whom he preached, not to be deceived or imposed upon by such pretences, which, according to this writer's representation, tended to lead them so wrong in religion? Would not he at least have said it in confidence to Timothy when he was near his own death, and have instructed him to let others know it? But since the contrary to all this is manifest, that he everywhere in his epistle to the Gentile churches, and in those he wrote to Timothy, especially his last, writ a little before his own death, represents the Scriptures of the Old Testament as of divine authority, and refers to them on all occasions as such; it is but reasonable to conclude, supposing him to be a man of common honesty, that he himself believed them to be so, and intended to recommend them to those churches among whom he preached as such. To which it may be added, that it is evident in fact, as appears from the eldest monuments of those times still extant, that the churches which the apostle Paul planted among the Gentiles, and who looked upon themselves as freed from the obligation of the Mosaic law and ordinances, did receive the Scriptures of the Old Testament as of divine authority, and did read them as well as the writings of the apostles in their public assemblies, and that they have continued to be owned as such by the general consent of the Christian Gentile church unto this day.

In pp. 84, 85, he reflects upon a passage in which I had said, that 'the apostle Paul insisted upon it, that he had received an immediate revelation from God, concerning the abrogating the ceremonial law, as our author himself acknowledges.' Upon which he saith, 'This is another mere fiction and forgery, for never did St. Paul nor I assert any such thing: and therefore all the author's rant upon it afterwards can only serve to show the candour and justice of such spiritual systematical scholastics.' And p. 87, he saith, that I 'most unrighteously urge his concession for the abrogation of the ceremonial law by an immediate revelation to

St. Paul.' And then he goes on to observe, that 'this law could not be abrogated or repealed with regard to the Gentiles, who had never been bound by it; and as to its continued obligation to the Christian Jews, it never came into the question.'

When I first read this reflection of the author's, I imagined, that in the citation I had made from his book, I had by mistake put in the word immediate, and added it to revelation; for though this would not have altered the sense, yet it would have been enough to have given him occasion to raise mighty clamours upon it. But, notwithstanding all his confidence, I did not think him, or any other writer, capable of bringing in such a direct and strong charge, where there was not the least foundation or pretence for it. But now I find there is nothing so unfair, or so contrary to evident truth or fact, which this writer will not venture to assert, if he thinks it may but expose his adversary. The reader will not think this too severe, when he reads the following paragraph, quoted out of his first book, and to which I had referred. He there tells us, that 'the great concerning debate of that time was reduced to these two questions; first, whether the Jewish converts were still obliged, in point of religion and conscience, to obey the whole law? and, secondly, whether the Gentile converts, as a matter of religion and conscience, were bound to comply with the Mosaic law of proselytism, as the necessary condition upon which the Christian Jews were to hold communion with them? In both these points, the apostles, elders, and brethren at Jerusalem, in consequence of their decree, stood to the affirmative, while Paul as stiffly maintained the negative against them, declaring that he had received this not from man, or by any intermediate conveyance, but by immediate revelation.' And after having observed, that this controversy at length rose so high, that the rest of the apostles thought themselves obliged to separate from St. Paul, he again repeats it, that 'St. Paul still insisted upon immediate revelation for this,' Mor. Phil. vol. i. pp. 78, 79.

Here it is as evident as words can make it, that he himself makes one of the questions which he supposes to have been debated between St. Paul and the other apostles to relate to the continued obligation of the law upon the Jewish converts, though in his present book he saith, that this 'never came into the question.' And that he makes St. Paul to maintain, that even the Jewish converts were 'not obliged, in point of religion and conscience, to obey the whole law,' in opposition to the other apostles who maintained that they were thus obliged. And that the apostle pleaded, that he had received 'this by immediate revelation from God.' And before this, he had declared, that 'St. Paul, in all the Jewish synagogues where he had preached, in Greece and Asia Minor, had taught and maintained that the law was abrogated and done away by the death and resurrection of Christ; that in Christ, or under the gospel dispensation, there could be no difference or distinction between Jew or Gentile,' see Mor. Phil. vol. i. p. 67. And in p. 52, he had represented it as a matter of fact, too plain to be doubted of or

denied; that St. Paul, in his preaching to the Gentiles and to the dispersed among the Jews, throughout all the parts of the Roman empire, had set aside the obligation of the Jewish ceremonial law, and declared it abolished and done away by the death and sacrifice of Christ.' He has this over again, pp. 57, 59, And that this was 'clearly St. Paul's opinion and a new doctrine of his own,' *ibid.* And expressly saith, that all the apostles, 'Barnabas, &c. fell off from St. Paul, because they could not agree to absolve the Jewish converts from their obedience to the law, as the law of God, or as a matter of religion and conscience,' p. 72. And that, therefore, as he expresses it, p. 79, they left him to preach his own gospel, as he called it, in his own way. And then adds, that St. Paul 'insisted upon immediate revelation for this;' that is, for this among other things, that the Jewish converts were not 'still obliged, in point of religion and conscience, to obey the law:' or in other words, that the law was abrogated and done away in Christ, even with regard to the Jewish converts. And yet he has the confidence now to charge me with fiction, forgery, and unrighteousness, as if I had abused and misrepresented him in the highest degree, for saying, that he himself acknowledged, in his former book, that St. Paul insisted upon it, that he had received an immediate revelation from God, concerning the abrogating the ceremonial law. And, in most express contradiction to what he himself had asserted in his former book, he now affirms, that 'St. Paul pretended to no revelation from God, as abrogating the ceremonial law with regard to the Jews,' p. 87. I leave it to the reader to make what reflections he thinks fit upon this conduct.

He has a long, confused ramble, pp. 85—92. The design of which is to show, that St. Paul could not look upon the law of Moses, as a thing which had been originally instituted by God, but which he knew by revelation was now abrogated. But he offers little on this head but what he had alleged before, and which was fully confuted. It was proved, in the book which he has attempted to answer, by plain and express testimonies from the apostle Paul himself, who best understood his own sense, that he did look upon the law of Moses to have been originally of divine institution; and that even where he argues against its being now obligatory, yet he grants and asserts this law to have been originally given by God himself, and that for wise purposes. It was also shown that he plainly declares, that this law is now abrogated; that whereas we were formerly 'kept under the law' till the faith should be revealed, and the 'promised seed' should come, as a child in his state of non-age is kept under the discipline of tutors and governors, we are now freed from that yoke; whereas it was as a 'schoolmaster to lead us unto Christ,' we are now no longer 'under that schoolmaster;' that Christ hath broken 'down the middle wall of partition,' that is, the ceremonial law which was a partition-wall between Jews and Gentiles; and that he 'abolished the enmity, even the law of commandments, consisting in ordinances:' that he hath 'blotted out the hand-writing of ordi-

nances and hath taken it away, nailing it to his cross:' and that now in 'Christ Jesus there is neither Jew nor Greek, but all are one in Christ Jesus.*' I question whether any words could be more express to show that the law of Moses is now no longer in force; and that the obligation of it is taken away through Jesus Christ. This was evidently part of the gospel the apostle Paul preached in opposition to the Judaizing teachers; and he expressly declares, that he had the gospel which he preached, 'not of man nor by man, but by revelation of Jesus Christ;' which is as plain a description of his having had it by immediate revelation, as any words can be. From whence it clearly follows, that he had it by revelation from Jesus Christ, that the law of Moses was now abolished, and no longer obligatory in point of religion and conscience. But our author urges against this, that 'if there had been any revelation at all about abrogating the ceremonial law, Peter and the other apostles and teachers of the circumcision must doubtless have known it, and it must have been first revealed to them as being more immediately concerned in it; and that if St. Paul had urged any such revelation, it must have been rejected by them as a false pretension and an imposture, as God had revealed no such matter to any of them.' pp. 85, 87, 89. And he has it over again, p. 98. But if it should be granted, that St. Paul had a revelation relating to this matter before it was revealed to any other of the apostles, or that it was more clearly and fully revealed to him than it was to any of the rest, and that he was more expressly appointed and commissioned to declare it, it would not follow, either that it was not a true revelation from God to St. Paul, or that the other apostles would not or could not acknowledge it as such. The apostle Peter had a revelation relating to his preaching the gospel to the Gentiles, and taking them into the Christian church, without putting a difference between them and the Jews, before the other apostles had it; but they did not for this reject it, but when they found he had such a revelation, acquiesced in it with joy. And it was evidently proved in my former book, that the other apostle did not deny the revelation which St. Paul professed to have received from Christ, but approved the doctrines he preached, and acknowledged his divine mission. If this writer could prove that the other apostles had, or pretended to have, a contrary revelation, and that in opposition to St. Paul, they urged it upon the Jewish converts as a duty to observe the ceremonial law as still necessary in point of religion and conscience, this would be something to his purpose; and this he had asserted in his former book. But in answer to him, it was shown, that there was an entire harmony between St. Paul and the other apostles on that head: that it doth not appear, by any one passage in the whole New Testament, that any of the apostles ever once exhorted their Christian converts to adhere to the law of Moses, and the rites there prescribed, as still obligatory under the gospel: that the doctrines they preached, as well as the

* See Rom. vi. 14, Gal. iii. 25, 28, iv. 5, Eph. ii. 14, 15, Col. ii. 14, iii. 11.

apostle Paul, tended to prepare the Jewish converts for an entire abrogation of the law: and that it appears, from their whole conduct, that neither St. Paul nor the other apostles looked upon the law of Moses as properly obligatory under the gospel, in point of conscience, and as necessary to our justification and acceptance with God; though both he and they looked upon it to be still lawful to observe the Mosaic rites in compliance with weak consciences. This, indeed, is what this writer cannot comprehend. He thinks it is evident, that if St. Paul or the other apostles had known by revelation, that the law was abrogated or abolished by Jesus Christ, they could not have complied with it, or observed it all in religion, reason, or conscience; which yet we find they did. He triumphs in this, as if it were perfect demonstration, and has it over and over, as if he were never weary of repeating it.* But the whole of what he says on this head proceeds upon a palpable mistake, as if because that law was no longer obligatory as before, so as to bind the consciences of men to the observance of it as necessary by a divine command, therefore the observation of it became immediately and absolutely unlawful: but this doth not follow. Two things were observed, that fully account for the consistency of the conduct of St. Paul and the other apostles in this matter. The one is, that they knew it was the will of God, that the law of Moses with its peculiar rites, should be no longer strictly obligatory in point of conscience on the disciples of Jesus; and that Christ, by his coming, and by his death, had really superseded that law, and set them free from the obligation of its ceremonial rites and ordinances; and had taken away the distinction between Jews and Gentiles. The other is, that they also knew that it was the will of God, that in a merciful condescension to the prejudices of the Jews, the observation of that law and its peculiar rites should be indulged for a while, and that the abrogation of it should not be urged upon them all at once, but by degrees; which was accordingly done. And I showed the great wisdom and reasonableness of this method. Our author has not offered the least answer to the proofs I had brought for this;† but contents himself with assuring his reader, that I have not 'answered any thing that had been said,' but that 'I ramble on upon a presumption, that the ceremonial law had been at first in St. Paul's account, an immediate divine institution, and consequently a real matter of religion and conscience to those who were under it, but was now vacated, and done away, or repealed, by revelation;' but that, for this, I have not the 'least authority from St. Paul, nor any other apostle.' p. 91. And if he can make such a general, confident assertion pass with any of his readers for a sufficient answer to all the proofs I had alleged, he is a very lucky man: in the mean time, till he offers something new, I shall pass this by, together with his choice flowers about 'fox-hunting,' and a 'wild-geese chase' and pursuing or not 'pursuing an untamed creature.'

* See pp. 85, 88, 89, 94, 98, 100, 101.

† See all this proved, Divine Authority, pp. 235, &c.

He next observes, p. 92, that 'Moses had given the laws to the people as a standing perpetual ordinance throughout all their generations, and that, consequently, any abrogation or repeal of it must be contrary to the nature and declared intention of the law itself.' And he observes, that to this I answered, that the words 'for ever,' 'everlasting,' &c., do not always signify, to the end of the world. This, indeed, was one thing I urged, but it is far from being the whole of what I offered, as this writer thinks fit to represent it. It was farther observed, that whatever we suppose the extent of those phrases 'for ever,' and 'throughout their generations,' to be, the design was only to signify, that Israel should be obliged to a perpetual observation of those laws till God should signify his will to the contrary; and that it was never to be abrogated by any human authority, nor were the people themselves to cast off the obligations of it by any act of their own. But it was not the design of those phrases to signify, that God himself would never change or abrogate those laws. On the contrary, Moses himself plainly signified, that they might afterwards expect a new law and new institutions from God, and directed their thoughts to another that was to arise 'like unto him,' to whom they were to hearken, and to do what he should command them in the name of God. And that afterwards, the abolition of the law, and the introducing of a new dispensation, was more clearly signified by the prophets. And finally, that the very nature of the law itself plainly showed, that it was not designed to be of invariable continuance.* Of all this, our author takes not the least notice; only observes, that it is very plain, that the whole nation never understood it so. Which is far from being true, since it hath been often shown, by evident testimonies from the Jewish writers, that some of them have acknowledged, that in the days of the Messiah there should be a new law, and that the ceremonial law of Moses should be abolished.† And if the Nazarene or Christian Jews were (as he urges) for a long time 'zealous for the law,' it only shows the great power of prejudice; though many of those that had been converted from among the Jews to the Christian faith, did, in process of time, come to see their liberty.

He goes on to acquaint us, p. 93, that he had urged, 'that Moses had established propitiations and atonements for sin, by the blood of beasts; and that St. Paul had declared it to be impossible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sin.' And then he says, speaking of me, 'the author grants this contradiction, and yet says it is no contradiction. *For though the blood of beasts might take away sin under the law, yet it could not do it now the law was abolished.*' It is thus he represents my argument, and puts these last words in an Italic character, to lead the reader to think they were my own words. Any one that compares this with what I had offered in the book he pretends to answer, pp. 60, 61,

* See Divine Authority, pp. 58—60.

† The reader may see several express testimonies to this purpose collected from the ancient Jewish writings, in Bishop Chandler's Defence, &c. pp. 359, 360.

will find how far this is from being a fair representation of the argument.

As to the contradiction he speaks of, there is no more a contradiction, according to the doctrine of the apostle, between the sacrifices appointed under the law and the sacrifices of Christ, than between the substance and the shadow, the type and the anti-type. The apostle's doctrine is plainly this, that the legal sacrifices could not by any virtue of their own, purge away sin, or make the offerer 'perfect, as pertaining to the conscience.' They were external atonements in the eye of the law, upon offering of which, in the manner there prescribed, the person was legally clean, and free from the penalty he had incurred, and the guilt he had contracted. But they were not in their own nature a proper satisfaction to God, and a sufficient expiation for the sins of men. And in this sense it was then, and always will be, impossible for the 'blood of bulls and goats to take away sin.' And therefore they were not instituted merely for their own sakes, but with a farther view, as types and prefigurations of that most perfect sacrifice to be offered in fullness of time, viz., that of the Son of God, who 'through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God,' and hath appeared once in the end of the world to 'put away sin by the sacrifice of himself; which being infinitely superior to that of bulls and goats, had a much greater virtue and efficacy, and could alone do that in reality, which the oblations under the law could only do in type and figure. This is evidently the apostle's doctrine, and upon which the strain of his arguing depends.

What hath our author to say to this? Can he deny that the apostle all along, in that epistle, supposes the law of Moses, particularly with regard to the sacrifices and priesthood, to have been of divine institution, even where he is arguing for its being abolished? It is incontestably evident, that in the whole course of his argument, he not only grants, but asserts this; as appears from the passages cited in my former book, pp. 82, 83. Nor has this writer any thing to offer against it, but the old story, that if it had been originally a divine institution, and afterwards set aside by revelation, the apostle Paul could not have observed that law in any one instance. And upon saying no more than this, which had been so fully answered, he thinks fit to triumph over me, as not 'capable of conviction,' or of 'thinking out of the common systematical track.' p. 94.

I had mentioned the apostle's declaring, 'that the legal sacrifices sanctified to the purifying of the flesh; and that this external atonement is what Moses intends as the immediate consequence of the priest's sprinkling the blood.' But he cannot for his 'life understand, or make any sense of this external legal purification and atonement.' And the truth is, as he represents the matter, nobody can understand it. 'He cannot,' he says, 'make any sense of this external legal purification and atonement for sin, where no sin had been committed, for which the law required the sacrifice, and no sin could be pardoned or done away by it,' p. 94. This, indeed, is ab-

solite nonsense, to talk of a legal atonement for sin where no sin had been committed against the law, and no pardon could be obtained by it. But then the nonsense is his own, and he may take the credit of it. This external purification and atonement for sin did suppose that a sin had been committed for which the law required the sacrifice, and that the sin or fault was done away or pardoned in the eye of the law. And this is what the apostle calls 'sanctifying to the purifying of the flesh;' *i.e.* a person was, upon offering the sacrifice, outwardly sanctified or cleansed; he was clear, in the eye of the law, from the guilt he had contracted. When, therefore, he goes on wisely to ask, 'was legal sin no sin, and legal forgiveness no pardon or remission of sins at all?' I answer, legal sin was a sin or fault committed against the law; and legal forgiveness was a pardon or remission of that sin in the eye of the law, and whereby a person was set legally clear and free. But he cannot 'conceive what sin could be forgiven or atoned for by a man's offering a sacrifice in the legal way, unless it was the sin of not offering it, which would have been punished with death, for any wilful presumptuous refusal.' This, again, is completely absurd. Let us suppose a man had committed a sin or fault, for which the law required sacrifice to be offered, and that upon offering the sacrifice, and doing what the law required, it was declared, that his sin was forgiven him. The question is, what sin was forgiven him? Any man of common understanding would take it, that it must be the sin on the account of which he offered the sacrifice, which was no longer to be charged upon him, nor was he to be obnoxious to any penalty on the account of it. No; this writer *cannot conceive* this at all; but he *can conceive* that the sin that was declared to be forgiven him upon offering the sacrifice, was the sin of not offering the sacrifice, *i.e.* a sin which he had not committed—for he did offer the sacrifice. Our author, who undoubtedly designs by this to expose the Mosaic constitution, has only manifested his own absurdity, and shown what an excellent expositor he would prove, if he was left to interpret the Scripture in his own way. He then goes on to repeat what he had said in his former book, that no 'punishment was ever remitted on the account of the sacrifice that was offered, except the punishment which must have been inflicted for disobedience, in case of not offering the sacrifice.' This is exactly repeating the same nonsense, in other words, which he had urged before, concerning remitting a punishment that had not been incurred, and pardoning a sin that had not been committed.

He next proceeds, pp. 95, 96, to say something about types. And he begins with observing, 'that I seem, by my way of talking upon it, to understand no more about the nature and use of types than a child when he is taught such things in his catechism.' And, therefore, he condescends, in his superior wisdom, to instruct me. And what he saith on this subject amounts to this: That all types are bare allegories, which had no original resemblance to the things to which they are compared, but are only afterwards accommodated by way

of allusion and illustration. And I will readily grant this author, that it does not prove that 'things had originally any such sense, meaning, or construction, merely because they are afterwards referred to in a way of allegory, simile, and allusion; and that such allegories and allusions may serve for illustration in comparing one thing to another, where there is any resemblance, but that they cannot alone establish any doctrinal truth.' In this our author has made no discovery, and has told me nothing but what I knew as well before. But still the question remains, whether, in the original institution of the law of Moses, there was not, in the design of God, a reference to what was to come under the New Testament dispensation? And whether some of the rites and ordinances, there prescribed, were not originally so contrived by the supreme wisdom as to be intended as types and prefigurations of 'good things to come?' In which case they differ from mere allegories, which, without having been originally intended, are only afterwards accommodated by way of allusion. And our author saith nothing at all to show the absurdity of such a scheme as this. This is evidently the scheme the apostle Paul goes upon. And though we could not demonstratively have urged this without such information, yet if the same Divine Spirit, by whom those ordinances were instituted, enlightened the apostle in discovering the original intention of them, this is a sufficient authority in the case. And now, by comparing the one with the other, as represented by the apostle, the beautiful harmony and correspondence between the type and the antitype appears; and this gives a noble and comprehensive view of the Divine wisdom, and shows one uniform glorious design still carrying on from the beginning.

In pp. 96, 97, he repeats what he had said in his former book, concerning the Mosaic law being, in St. Paul's opinion, a 'dispensation of darkness, slavery,' &c., and that therefore it could not be a divine institution, and that it is directly contrary to the Gospel. What he had offered on this head was fully and distinctly considered*, to which he has not vouchsafed the least answer. I need not, therefore, take any farther notice of it, nor of some other things here said by him, which he had repeated twice or thrice before in this very section, and which have been already considered. He concludes, with an attempt to prove, that the Epistle to the Hebrews was not written by St. Paul: but, he himself had, both in his former book, and in this very section, supposed that St. Paul was the author of it. For, p. 93, he urges, 'that St. Paul had declared it to be impossible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sin.' And it is only in the Epistle to the Hebrews that this declaration of St. Paul is to be found. But it happened to be for his convenience, at that time, to suppose St. Paul to have been the author of this epistle; and now, a few pages after, it is most for his convenience to deny it. And what does he produce to

* See 'Divine Authority,' pp. 52—57.

show that that Epistle was not written by St. Paul? Why, it is plain to him, that 'it is not written in that apostle's style and language. There is nothing in it of his loftiness of expression and strength of imagination.' This author has a very nice taste; but others, who are as good judges as he, find it nothing inferior to any of his epistles in strength or loftiness. And the learned Spanheim hath produced a great number of expressions in this epistle parallel to those in his other epistles, and many of them peculiar to St. Paul, and only to be found in his writings.* He farther urges, 'that St. Paul's not setting his name to this epistle, as he did to all his genuine undoubted and authentic writings, is alone sufficient to set aside this epistle,' &c. But St. Paul's not prefixing his name to it cannot be alone a proof that he did not write it, if we have other sufficient reasons to believe him the author of it. And I think we have sufficient reason, both from the testimony of the most ancient writers, who mention it as St. Paul's, and the general consent of the Greek Church from the beginning†, and from his way of concluding that epistle, exactly after St. Paul's manner, chap. xiii. 18, 19, 24, 25, and talking of his coming to see them with Timothy, whom he represents as 'set at liberty,' and whom he calls his brother; and from the testimony of St. Peter, who plainly makes mention of an epistle written by St. Paul to those to whom Peter directed his epistle, who seem principally to have been the believing Jews.

But our author farther urges, that 'it is plain to him, that this epistle must have been written after the destruction of the temple, and the cessation of the Jewish priesthood and sacrifices, because it never mentions the temple or sacrifices as then subsisting; but always speaks of the Jewish priesthood and economy as abolished, done away, and ceased.' On the contrary, it may be argued, that throughout that whole epistle he speaks all along as if the temple were still in being, and its sacred rites and ceremonies still in use among the Jews. And it can scarce be supposed, that if this epistle had been written after the destruction of the temple, the author of it would have omitted the mention of this, which might have been of considerable advantage to his argument. In the epistle ascribed to Barnabas, and which is written pretty much on the same subject with that to the Hebrews, the destruction of the temple is expressly mentioned, cap. 16. Where, speaking of the temple, he saith, 'it is now destroyed by their enemies.' Then, citing a prophecy, to show that the city, temple, and people of Israel were to be given up, he adds, 'and it hath come to pass according as the Lord spake:' an evident proof that this Epistle was written after the destruction of Jerusalem. And if the Epistle to the Hebrews had been written after that event, we might have expected

* See his 'Dissert. de Autore Epistolæ ad Hebræos,' part ii. cap. 1, 2; part iii. cap. 1, §. 9.

† See the Dissertation now mentioned, part i. cap. 6. And the English reader may consult Whitby's Preface to his Commentary on that épistle.

some hints of this kind ; but no such thing appears.* As to what the author urges, that ' this epistle always speaks of the Jewish priesthood and economy as abolished, done away, and ceased : ' no more is said in this epistle to this purpose than in other epistles, which are undoubtedly St. Paul's, and written before the destruction of Jerusalem. As in the passage before referred to, p. 236, where he declares, ' that Christ hath broken down the middle wall of partition between Jews and Gentiles : and that he hath abolished the law of commandments in ordinances, ' &c., and hath ' blotted out the hand-writing of ordinances, and hath taken it away, nailing it to his cross. ' Here, it is evident, St. Paul speaks of the legal economy as abolished and done away in Christ, that is, that the obligatory virtue of it was ceased, in epistles written whilst the temple was yet standing. ' And yet our author here takes upon him to affirm, that ' the apostle never would have done this in his time, while he himself was complying with it occasionally, and pronounces it to be a most wild and extravagant notion, that the Jewish priesthood and sacrifices had been abolished and done away, while the whole Christian circumcision was under it, and submitting to it, ' p. 100, 101. The consistency of the practice and conduct of St. Paul and the other apostles in this matter hath been fully shown. But I cannot help observing, by the way, the great consistency of this writer, who, in his former book, had strongly asserted it over and over as a most certain matter of fact, that could not be denied, that St. Paul, in all the synagogues of the Jews throughout the lesser Asia, had preached up to the Jews themselves the abrogation of the ceremonial law, and endeavoured to convince them that it was done away by the death of Christ, as if he had made this the constant subject of his preaching, which is carrying the matter a great deal too far ; but in his present book represents the supposing him ever to have talked of the abrogation of the law at all, ' as so wild and extravagant a notion, that it deserves no consideration at all. ' What can be done with an author that so glaringly contradicts himself, and seems to have no settled scheme of principles at all, but affirms or denies things just as best answers his present purpose ?

* He speaks, chap. viii. 13, of the Covenant's ' waxing old, and being ready to vanish away, *ἔγγις ἀφανισμοῦ*, near an abolishment or disappearing, ' which seems to show that the time for its utter abolition or vanishing away by the destruction of the temple and city of Jerusalem was not yet come, but was very near.

CHAPTER VI.

That the law of Moses did not extend only to the outward actions, but to the inward dispositions. That it did not confine benevolence to those of their own particular body, nor was founded in the principles of persecution, shown in opposition to the author's attempt to prove the contrary. What he further offers to prove, that human sacrifices were indulged and encouraged in that law, shown to be vain and insufficient. His exceptions with regard to the case of Abraham's offering up Isaac, considered. That patriarch vindicated from his charge of enthusiasm.

THE author had, in his first book, affirmed, that the law of Moses was merely political, and that it could only relate to outward actions, but could not relate to the inward principles and motives of action, whether good or bad. In answer to which I showed, by express testimonies from that law, that it did not relate to the outward actions alone, but to the inward principles and motives of action. Upon which he now observes, that all political laws must presuppose the reasonableness of inward truth and righteousness, but yet it is only the outward practice or political part that can be guarded or secured by force: this is all that can be done by any temporal penal laws, p. 104. But the argument I urged was this, that Moses did not merely suppose, but frequently and expressly require and enjoin, a right disposition of the heart and mind, as well as a proper outward practice; and therefore this must be regarded as properly the subject-matter of his law.

Our author himself, after shifting awhile, owns that Moses preached moral truth and righteousness to the people, but then this he did, not as a lawgiver and judge, but as a prophet and preacher of righteousness. This is really granting the point in question. For it must be considered, that it was as a prophet extraordinarily inspired of God, that Moses delivered his law. And the design of it was not merely to erect that people into a civil community, but into a sacred polity. It was not therefore merely a system of political precepts, intended to regulate their outward actions and civil conduct in society, but to form them to just sentiments and a right practice in religion, and to give them directions as to the whole of their conduct. And, therefore, it contains solemn commands and injunctions, in the name of God himself, their supreme lawgiver, relating not only to their outward behaviour, but to the inward affections and dispositions of their minds. And these precepts are as express as any other commands of the law, enforced by the same divine authority by which the other commands are enforced. And though the neglect of those precepts that required good inward dispositions of mind, could not come under those penalties in the law that were to be inflicted by the civil Magistrate, yet they came under the general sanctions of the law, as enforced by the hopes of the divine favour, and the fears of the divine displeasure, to which they were taught by Moses to have a continual regard. And, therefore, no reason

can be given why these should not be as properly regarded as a part of that law, as any other laws or injunctions there prescribed. And in this view good men considered the law, and extolled its great usefulness and excellency, as enlightening the mind, purifying and rejoicing the heart, and converting the soul, &c. Psalm xix. 7—11.

I had urged the tenth commandment as forbidding all coveting, &c. The author answers, that this relates to the outward act of robbery, rapine, violence, &c. and not barely to the inward act of coveting, desiring or wishing for, &c. But how does he prove that it doth relate to the outward act of rapine, &c. The reason he gives, is, because if this was not against rapine and robbery, there is no commandment in the decalogue against it. As if the law, commanding not to steal, was not a sufficient prohibition of robbery and rapine, especially in so short and comprehensive a collection of laws as the decalogue is. But both the propriety of the words themselves naturally lead us to interpret the tenth commandment as principally relating to the inward desires and motions of evil concupiscence; and the apostle Paul so interprets it, as I showed, which this writer thinks proper to take no notice of. And though as he urges, the inward act of coveting could not possibly fall under the cognizance of any human penal law, yet it could fall under the cognizance of a divine law, and of God, the giver of that law, whom they were taught to regard as their supreme governor and judge, who perfectly knew their hearts, and from whom they were to expect rewards and punishments accordingly.

He had mentioned it as a defect in Moses's law, that it provided no sufficient remedy against intemperance, &c. But now he owns, that in the passage I quoted from Deut. xxix. 19, 20, Moses threatens such sinners, as indulged themselves in drunkenness and intemperance, with the vengeance of God, as offenders against the rule and law of righteousness; but he would have me produce a statute or law of Moses, where such acts of personal intemperance are made penal, i. e. where civil penalties were enacted against them. But, surely, if Moses threatens such sinners with the wrath of God, and that all the curses written in the law should be upon them, as in the passage I produced, this, to those that regarded it as the law of God, enforced by his express authority, ought to have had a mighty weight. And if, notwithstanding this, that nation run into great excesses of intemperance, as this writer alleges, this was not to be charged upon the law, but upon the corruption of mankind; no more than the corruption of Christians is to be charged upon the gospel-law.

But he farther observes, that 'St. Paul every where distinguishes the law of Moses from the law of faith, fidelity, or righteousness towards God. And that he proves at large, that righteousness could never be obtained by the law, which was a law of works, or outward obedience only,' p. 105. But this author entirely mistakes or misrepresents the apostle's sense, and seems to have no just notion at all of the design of his arguments on this subject. St. Paul doth not represent it as if the law only required outward obedience, whereas

the Gospel requires inward righteousness : nor doth he, by calling it the law of works in opposition to the law of faith, intend to signify, that it only required external works, or acts of duty. This would be to make him contradict himself, and subvert his own argument. For he expressly represents the law as extending to the inward motions of the soul, and as forbidding and condemning the inward irregular workings of concupiscence ; and that, therefore, it was by the law he came to the knowledge of sin. He declares, that the law was holy, just, and good ; and that it was spiritual, though men were carnal, Rom. vii. 7—14. And he proves, that by the works of the law could no man be justified, that is, accepted in the sight of God, and entitled to life ; which is what he means by justification in this argument, because no man could perfectly obey its precepts. And therefore, his doctrine is, that we must be justified or accepted only through the infinite grace and mercy of God, by which faith, or a steady dependence on his faithfulness, truth, and goodness, issuing in a sincere obedience and the practice of righteousness, is graciously accepted and rewarded, though imperfect, and attended with failures and defects. Thus Abraham the father of the faithful, who was so highly favoured of God, and upon their descent from whom the Jews so highly valued themselves, was justified before the law was given: He believed God, and it was accounted unto him for righteousness ; that is, he exercised a firm trust and dependence on his faithfulness, goodness, and mercy, and on his most gracious promises, and showed the reality of this faith by his obedience and ready submission to the significations of the divine will, and therefore was accepted and justified before God, though he had not yet received circumcision, nor was any part of the ceremonial law yet instituted. And when the law of Moses was afterwards given, the design of it was not to alter or annul the promise made to Abraham, or render it of none effect. Still good men, even under the law, were justified and accepted of God, as Abraham had been, not merely by their works, or obedience to the law, which obedience, being defective, could not in strict justice entitle them to a reward, but by their faith and trust in the divine grace and mercy, productive of a sincere though imperfect obedience. The law was added, as the apostle speaks, because of transgressions. It was given to restrain idolatry, and other offences, to discover to men their duty, and to convince them of sin, to keep them under a strict discipline and tutorage, suited to that time and state of things, till the time should come for the last and most perfect revelation of the divine will, and for the full discovery of the divine grace and mercy through Jesus Christ, the promised Saviour. This seems to be the account the apostle gives of the true original design and intent of the law. And, accordingly, Christ being come, that peculiar economy is abolished. And as Abraham was justified without the observance of the Mosaic law, or any of its peculiar rites and ceremonies which were not then instituted ; so Christians now are justified without observing any of the peculiar legal rites and injunctions, which were only imposed for a

time till the promised seed should come, in whom all nations were to be blessed. They are accepted and justified as Abraham was, freely, by divine grace through faith, or a steady trust in God, and dependence on his mercy, faithfulness, and goodness, and on his most gracious promises and the revelations he hath given of his will, accompanied with a sincere though imperfect obedience to his holy and excellent precepts. But this faith, now required of us, hath a more explicit regard than that of Abraham had to the Redeemer, as being now actually come, and in whom the exceeding riches of the divine grace and mercy are most gloriously displayed, and freely offered and exhibited.

But to return to our author. He had laid a mighty stress upon it, as an insuperable objection against the Mosaical economy, that though it obliged those that were under it to live in peace and amity with one another, yet they were put into a state of war with the rest of the world; and that the Jewish state, or the religion of Moses, was founded on the principles of persecution. In opposition to this it was clearly shown, by express testimonies from the law itself, that it prescribed to the people of Israel, who were constituted under it, a kind and benevolent conduct, not only towards one another, those of the same community, but towards strangers of any other nation that were among them, whom they were most expressly commanded to treat with the utmost kindness and humanity. And, whereas this writer had urged, that this was only to be understood of such strangers as were incorporated with them, I showed, that it extended to all strangers, though not incorporated into their peculiar polity, nor observing any of their particular laws and rites, provided they did but worship the one true God, free from idolatry; nor were they ever to persecute any for not conforming to their peculiar rites and forms of religion and worship.

But the author is resolved to persist in his charge. And the great thing he alleges to make it good is, because of their distinctive rites and usages, whereby they were kept separate from other nations, which he represents as obliging them 'not so much as to converse with those of any other nation, nor to show them the least marks of common respect, civility, or decency.' And he thinks there could not be a more effectual method taken to establish a state of eternal enmity and war between them and the rest of the world than this; and that it 'was not possible that a people thus constituted could propagate the true religion to other nations but by force of arms.' And that this therefore, was a 'declaration of war with the rest of the world, made and confirmed by their very constitution,' pp. 107, 108. And he repeats it again, p. 112. It will be acknowledged, that by the Mosaic constitution there were many distinctive rites and usages appointed, the design of which was to keep them from incorporating with other nations, lest they should learn their corrupt customs, and by too great a familiarity be drawn into a conformity to their idolatrous rites. And the proneness they showed to revolt to the usages of other nations, notwithstanding all this care to keep them distinct, showed the wisdom and expediency

of this constitution. But though they were thus kept distinct and separate from other people, it doth not follow, that therefore they were hereby put into a state of war with them by their very constitution; nor that they were obliged not so much as to converse with them, or show them the 'least marks of common respect, civility, and decency.' There is no such thing urged upon them in their law. They might, notwithstanding their distinctive rites, show them all the offices of humanity. It is observed concerning the ancient Egyptians, Gen. xliii. 32, 'That they might not eat bread with the Hebrews; for that is an abomination to the Egyptians.' And therefore when Joseph entertained his brethren with great kindness, they had bread set for them by themselves. And Herodotus observes, concerning the Egyptians in his time, that they would not make use of a knife, a spit, or a pot belonging to the Greeks, nor take a bit of beef cut with a Greek's knife, Herod. Euterpe, cap. 41. And after this, cap. 78 of the same book, he concludes his discourse concerning their feasts with this observation, *πατρίοισι δὲ χρεώμενοι νόμοισι ἄλλον οὐδένα ἐπικτεῶνται τοῖσι*: 'Using their own country-customs, they receive no other besides them.' And afterwards, cap. 91, that as they use no Greek customs, so *μηδ' ἄλλων*, &c. 'neither would they use the customs of any other men in the world.' Yet this did not hinder the Egyptians from conversing with those of other nations; nor were they for this regarded as in a 'state of eternal enmity and war with the rest of mankind.' Nor did it hinder them from propagating their religion, since by the author's own acknowledgment, they were the great propagators of idolatry to other nations. And though he takes upon him to affirm, that a people constituted as the Jews were could have no other way of propagating their religion but by force of arms, the contrary to this is evident from undeniable fact. For that they did propagate the true religion, and did proselyte great numbers of other nations all over the Roman empire, as well as in Babylon, Persia, and many parts of the East, without using any force of arms. There might be some pretence for charging the Mosaic constitution as putting the Jews into a state of war with the rest of mankind, if any passage could be produced out of the law, urging the Jews to such a conduct towards all other nations, as Socrates is introduced by Plato prescribing to the Greeks with respect to the barbarians, which was a name they generally gave to all other nations but themselves.*

To what I had observed, that by the law of Moses they were expressly obliged to show kindness, not only to one another, but to strangers too, our author answers, as he had done before, that it

* He would have the Greeks look upon one another as all of the same family and kindred, but upon the barbarians as strangers and aliens; that the Greeks were *φύσει φίλοι*, 'friends by nature,' and therefore they should not go to war with one another; or if they did, they should do it as if they were some time to be reconciled; but that the barbarians were *πολέμιοι φύσει*, 'enemies by nature,' with whom they were to be continually at war; that it would therefore be wrong for the Grecians to destroy Grecians, to reduce them to slavery, or waste their fields, or burn their houses; but that they should do all this to the barbarians. See Plat. de Repub. l. 5. Op. Tom. ii. pp. 470, 471.

was only to their own 'naturalized strangers, or the proselytes who lived among them, and who worshipped the same God, and made a part of the same nation,' p. 108. And he represents it as an extraordinary piece of assurance in me, to deny that 'the proselytes of the gate were naturalized strangers, or that they were considered and owned as members of the same society,' p. 109. The reader that is at all acquainted with these matters, will be apt to smile at this passage. The writer had, in what he said on this head in his former book, showed his utter ignorance of the Jewish constitution. I endeavoured to set him right, and show him his mistake; that though the proselytes of righteousness, who were circumcised and obliged to observe the whole law, were naturalized and looked upon as Jews, and belonging to their particular body or polity; yet the proselytes of the gate, who worshipped the true God, but were not obliged to any of the peculiar Mosaic rites,* never were looked upon as naturalized, or belonging to that particular polity or body, but were still regarded as Gentiles, and as the pious among the Gentiles. But our author is resolved to persist in his error. He had said they were naturalized; and he is resolved that it shall be so; and not only will not receive information when it is offered him, but is for abusing those that are not as ignorant, or will not speak as improperly as himself.

His proof that they were naturalized is pleasant enough. 'I am very sure (says he) that by the law of Moses they were to be received, considered, and treated as brethren and fellow-citizens, and were under the protection of the law as much as the circumcised Jews themselves, while they lived among them. And this was all that I meant by naturalization.' Who would not admire the acuteness of this writer? that is, because they were to be treated very kindly and tenderly, therefore they were naturalized, or regarded as belonging to their peculiar nation or polity. Whereas the proper conclusion from it is this; that though they were not (as it is certain they were not) regarded as belonging to their peculiar polity or national body; yet they were to be treated with the utmost kindness and humanity. Though, if we should allow this to be a sufficient proof of their naturalization, it would only prove, contrary to this writer's intention, that the Mosaic constitution was of a large and noble extent. For it seems all the world were naturalized and looked upon as belonging to their body, only upon worshipping the one true God free from idolatry, and without observing their peculiar rites and ceremonies.

But he makes an attempt, if he could prove it, that would be something more to his purpose. After having told us, that the proselytes of the gate 'made a part of the same nation,' he saith, that though they were not circumcised, yet 'they complied with the sacrificial part of the law, and paid their tithes and dues to the

* Thus we find the 'strangers within their gates,' that is, who were suffered to dwell among them, and to whom they are so often commanded to show kindness, in the law, are allowed 'to eat that which died of itself;' which was expressly prohibited to every Jew. Deut. xiv. 21.

priests.' He expresses himself as if he intended to put it upon his reader, that the proselytes of the gate, who were uncircumcised, observed all that part of the Mosaic law that related to sacrifices. And this every body, that is not a stranger to that constitution, knows to be a great mistake. The Gentiles, indeed, were allowed, though not obliged, to offer some kinds of sacrifices to God, as sacrifices had been a part of worship in use before the law was given; but there were many sacrifices required on particular occasions, and which all the Israelites or proselytes of righteousness were obliged to offer in the manner there prescribed; but the proselytes of the gate never were required, nor so much as permitted to offer them, or any sacrifices that had the peculiar rites of the Mosaic law intermixed with them; nor to pay tithes, first-fruits, &c. These were so far from being required of them by the law of Moses, or by any of the Jewish constitutions, that if they should offer them they were to be rejected. See all this fully proved by the learned Mr. Selden, *De Jur. Nat. et Gent. Lib. iii. Ap. 3—7.*

As to what he saith, that 'Solomon, when he built the temple, assigned a particular court for those devout Gentiles who came up with their gifts and offerings to Jerusalem; and he prays for them, that God would bestow upon them all the favours and blessings of his own people, p. 109.' This only proves against himself, that that constitution was not on so narrow a foundation as he represents it; for Solomon is there praying for strangers that were not of the people of Israel. See *1 Kings viii. 41—43.* But it doth not prove, that those strangers were regarded as naturalized and incorporated into their peculiar body and polity without circumcision. And indeed the very name of the court of the Gentiles (though it does not appear that there was any court with that name in Solomon's time, as there was afterwards) shows that they were still regarded as Gentiles, and not as belonging to the Jewish nation or body at all; and therefore they were not suffered to come within those limits, into which every Jew and every proselyte of righteousness was allowed to come; and it was considered as penal if they transgressed those bounds.

Page 110, the author gives a signal instance how much he is to be depended upon in representing the sense of his adversaries. He represents me as pretending, 'that though persecution for conscience' sake, or establishing true religion by force of arms, would be wrong now, and must be wrong under all circumstances of which we can judge; yet it does not follow that therefore it was wrong under a theocracy, or under the circumstances of the Israelites when that law was given.' This, he says, is the sum of my whole argument under this head; where he very candidly puts it upon his reader, that I have acknowledged that 'persecution for conscience' sake, or establishing religion by force of arms, was allowed, and even prescribed by the law of Moses;' when the design of that part of my book was to show, that the law of Moses did not prescribe persecution for conscience' sake. And then he proceeds, very formally, to argue against persecution for conscience' sake, or establishing reli-

gion by outward force and violence. He urges, that 'the argument depends on the eternal, immutable reason and fitness of things, the moral perfections of God, and the nature of religion in itself,' &c. But he might have spared his argument; and instead of proving, that to force religion upon the conscience, or to force the outward practice against conscience is wrong, he should have proved, that in the Mosaic constitution, persecution for conscience' sake is established. On the contrary, it is certain, that in that constitution there was no attempt to be used to 'force religion upon conscience and inward judgment, or to force the outward practice against conscience and inward judgment.' No person of any other nation was ever to be forced to embrace the Mosaic law, or to observe any of its particular rites or constitutions, against their own judgments or consciences. Their benevolence was not to be confined to those of their own particular form of religion or worship, but was to extend to all that worshipped the One God, the supreme Lord of the universe; nor were such persons obliged to worship him by any of the peculiar rites of the law. And how happy would it have been for the world, if this had been imitated by all other constitutions! They were not indeed to suffer any idolaters to dwell in their land; and if any of their own nation openly revolted to the worship of other gods, he was to be put to death; because, as I showed,* this was subversive of the very fundamental constitution of their polity, and of that original contract upon which their state was founded, and on which their preservation as a community, their right to all their privileges, and to their country itself, depended. So that those that were guilty of idolatry were, in the worst sense, traitors and enemies to their country. And if our author will call this persecution, he may, if he pleases, call all putting persons to death for being engaged in a conspiracy to subvert the state, persecution. But let him prove, by any argument from the nature of things, either that it was unworthy of God to appoint and establish a constitution, the fundamental principle of which was the acknowledgment and worship of the one only living and true God, and to make this the condition of their national privileges and prosperity; or that, supposing such a constitution, it was contrary to the nature and perfections of God, or to the reason of things, to make a law, that those that attempted to subvert that constitution by worshipping other gods, should be punished with death. But, for ought I know, he may think it unfit for God himself to execute judgments on idolaters, either in this world or in the next, for fear of forcing conscience; and on this account may find as much fault with the Christian constitution, as being contrary to the rights of conscience, as he had done by the Mosaic; since it is there expressly declared, that 'idolaters shall not enter into the kingdom of God.' See Gal. v. 20, 1 Cor. vi. 9. But we expect he should bring other proofs of this than his own confident assertions; which with me, and I believe with the generality of his readers, pass for nothing at all.

* See Divine Authority, p. 177.

He had asserted in his former book, that the 'Jews were not only set at liberty, but encouraged and directed by Moses himself to extend their conquests as far as they could, and to destroy by fire and sword every nation that would not become their subjects and slaves. That their plan of government was contrived for conquest; and that Moses commands all idolatry to be exterminated by fire and sword, not only in Canaan, but in all the rest of the world, as far as his people should have it in their power, and that of this Moses was very confident.' In answer to this it was shown, that though they were not to tolerate idolatry in their own country, as being absolutely subversive of the fundamental constitution of their polity, yet they were never commissioned to destroy idolaters in the rest of the world by fire and sword. And it is so far from being true, that their plan of government was contrived for universal conquest, as this writer represents it, that the whole frame of their constitution was so contrived as to discourage a restless ambition of enlarging their empire. And the laws given them were of such a nature, as rendered it extremely difficult, if not impracticable for them, to make and maintain large conquests abroad. And though Moses knew and expressed his confidence that they should conquer the land of Canaan and the nations there, because God had promised it, yet he was so far from being very confident, as our author affirms, that they should extend their conquests through the rest of the world, that he knew and foretold the contrary: all this was clearly and fully proved.* Nor does this author so much as attempt to answer any of the proofs that were brought; but yet, that he may make a show of reasoning, he tells us, pp. 111, 112, that Moses was confident his people should conquer the land of Canaan, whereas, what he had to prove was, that he was confident they should conquer the rest of the world; and then falls into a furious invective, as he had done several times before, against the war with the Canaanites; and that this shows Moses thought fire and sword the best way of propagating true religion. But the destruction of the Canaanites, as hath been shown, was in execution of God's just vengeance upon those nations, not merely for their idolatry, but for the most abominable wickedness and vices of all kinds. And this was not persecution, any more than the sending fire and brimstone upon Sodom and Gomorrah was persecution, or than a man that executes the sentence of a just magistrate in punishing a criminal, may be said to persecute that criminal. Our author's following discourse, p. 113, in which he instructs me, that things are sometimes ascribed to God in Scripture which were only permitted in the course of his providence, might be something to the purpose, if he could prove that the destruction of the Canaanites is only ascribed to God in the same general sense in which all evils and calamities are; but it is evident, that according to the representation there given, it was executed by the express command of God himself, notified and confirmed by the most illustrious

* See 'Divine Authority,' pp. 79, &c.

attestations. But this case hath been fully considered above ; to which I refer the reader, that I may not, like this writer, be guilty of continual repetitions.

He had in his former book asserted, that ‘ among the free-will offerings offered by the Jews under the law, human sacrifices were looked upon as the most efficacious and acceptable to the Lord.’ And that such ‘ oblations were encouraged and indulged under the law as the highest possible acts of religion and devotion, when they were intended and given up as sacrifices to the true God.’ In answer to this it was shown, from the nature and constitution of the law, that such sacrifices were not allowed there, since there are no directions any where concerning human sacrifices, as there must have been in that constitution, if they had been intended to have been ‘ indulged as the highest acts of devotion.’ For they were most expressly and solemnly forbidden to add to the law or diminish from it: and, particularly, were not to offer any other sacrifices, or in any other manner, than was there expressly appointed: this alone would be a sufficient answer to this writer’s insinuation. But, besides, it was shown by an express testimony from the law itself, Deut. xii. 30, 31, that it prohibited human sacrifices.

Our author, in answer, assures his reader, p. 115, that he had ‘ clearly proved, and beyond the possibility of any fair answer,’ that human sacrifices were indulged and allowed, though not enjoined by the law of Moses, and that they were supposed and included among the several other cases of ‘ vows or free-will offerings.’ He had, to this purpose, in his former book, cited Lev. xxvii. 28, 29; to which a particular answer was given, and it was shown, that it was not capable of the interpretation he put upon it. But he pronounces the answer I had given to be ‘ shamefully evasive, and contrary to my own convictions.’ And the account he gives of it is this. ‘ He pretends,’ says he, speaking of me, ‘ that the person or things to be given up and devoted to God in sacrifice, by a special or absolute vow and free-will offering, as Lev. xxvii. 29, were devoted and given up to him as a curse; or in a way of vengeance, as the Canaanites were.’ Where he represents me as pretending that that passage, Lev. xxvii. 29, relates to persons or things that were to be ‘ given up and devoted to God in sacrifice, by a special or absolute vow and free-will offering.’ Whereas this is what I expressly deny. I there show that the twenty-eighth verse relates to things which a man should devote to God by a special vow ‘ out of all that he had,’ that is, that belonged to him in property, not merely to ‘ be given up in sacrifice,’ for it will not be pretended, that the ‘ field of his possession’ was to be offered in sacrifice, but to be employed in sacred uses; and it is there determined, that whatever a man should thus devote to God by a special vow, whether person or thing, should be ‘ holy to the Lord,’ that is, perpetually employed to the uses to which it was devoted, and that it was never to be redeemed. But the 29th verse doth not relate to things which any man should devote of his own possession and property, which was the case of all free-will offerings, but to persons solemnly

devoted to destruction for just causes ; that none of these were ever to be redeemed, no ransom whatsoever was to be accepted for them, but they were surely to be put to death. This is the account which the Jews give of this passage, and which makes it perfectly consistent with other passages in the law, which this writer's interpretation of it is not ; nor does he produce so much as the shadow of an argument to show that it is not to be understood in that sense. And I referred him to Mr. Selden, by whom this is largely and accurately handled.

But he again produces the instance of Jephthah's sacrificing his daughter, as he had done before. I had observed, that 'whether Jephthah did really sacrifice his daughter, is a question debated among the most learned critics, both Jews and Christians, and still like to be so.' This our author explains thus : 'that is,' says he, 'they have doubted whether this story, as the Scripture relates it, is true or not, or whether the historian has here given us the real matter of fact ; for they could have no other real ground or cause of doubting.' But if this writer had known much of the matter that he undertakes to talk about, he would have known that the question or doubt in this debate, is not whether the story, as given by the historian, is true ; for this is agreed on all hands ; but what is the true meaning of the historian. The controversy is about the sense of some of the Hebrew phrases made use of in relating the story, whether they import that Jephthah really sacrificed his daughter or not.

But supposing Jephthah did really sacrifice his daughter, it only follows, as I observed before, that he did wrong in it, through a mistaken zeal and scrupulosity, since the law of Moses nowhere allowed human sacrifices. This our author denies ; and yet soon after says, that 'Jephthah's rashness in making such a vow, and thereby laying himself under such a necessity of law, was never approved of.' But how could it be thought an instance of rashness in Jephthah to make such a vow, or how can this writer consistently acknowledge that it 'was never approved of,' when he tells us, that 'among the free-will offerings offered by the Jews under the law, human sacrifices were looked upon as the most efficacious and acceptable to the Lord, and that they were encouraged and indulged as the richest donations, and were regarded as the highest possible acts of religion and devotion ?' If this had been the case, how comes it that Jephthah has always been blamed for it by those of his own nation that have supposed him to have offered such a sacrifice, and that no other instance can be produced of any of their great and good men that ever offered up a human sacrifice, through the whole course of their history ?

To the testimony I produced, to show that the law forbids such sacrifices, the author answers, that the 'passages I have referred to, where God absolutely forbade this people to worship and offer sacrifices to him after the manner of the heathen, conclude nothing at all.' But this is not a fair representation of my argument. In the passage I produced from Deut. xii. 30, 31, God not only prohibits

the people of Israel to worship him as the heathens worshipped their gods; but the sacrificing their sons and daughters is expressly mentioned as one instance of their worship which was an abomination to the Lord, and the Israelites are forbidden to do so to the Lord their God. And if this be not a manifest prohibition of human sacrifices under that constitution, it is hard to conceive what can be so. As to what he adds, that it 'would be hard to find any sort or kind of sacrifices in use among the heathens, that Moses did not adopt into his own scheme of superstition, only they were not to be offered in the same places nor to the same gods,' p. 117, this is far from being true. The offering up of swine was counted a valuable sacrifice among the heathens, which yet was held in abomination among the Jews; and many other animals that were offered in other nations were not allowed in the law of Moses. And that in these, and several other instances, the rites there prescribed were contrary to those of the heathens, is what may be proved with the clearest evidence. I need not take notice of what our author goes on to offer concerning the local tutelary god of Israel, or, popular idol of Israel, which he is sure could not be the true God, pp. 118, 119. He had said this before, and he is never weary of repeating his precious conceits, and obtruding them over and over upon his reader. But this hath been fully considered above, p. 370, &c.

He next comes to vindicate the argument he had brought from the law about the redemption of the first-born, *Exod. xiii.* He had urged, that that law laid the Israelites under a legal obligation to sacrifice their first-born children unto God, but that 'this law was afterwards very much mitigated, or rather repealed, viz. by God's accepting all the males of Levi for the first-born males of all, as a ransom or redemption of their lives.' And he added, that 'God hereby remitted the legal obligation of human sacrifices, and left it to the free choice and voluntary oblation of the people, whether their burnt-offerings of this kind should be male or female, and whether it should be the first-born or not.' I had taken this, as if the author intended by God's 'remitting the legal obligation of human sacrifices' to signify, that he only remitted the obligation they were under to offer up their male children as sacrifices or burnt-offerings to the Lord; but still they were to offer up some of their children, only they were at liberty to offer male or female, and whether they were first-born or not. The author exclaims against this as a gross abuse of him; and represents it, as if his intention in saying that God then remitted the legal obligation of human sacrifices, was to signify that the people were thereby absolutely freed from any obligation to offer any human sacrifices at all. I am willing to allow this to have been his sense, since he affirms it to have been so. But then I cannot understand to what purpose he there immediately adds, 'that God left it to the free choice and voluntary oblation of the people, whether their burnt-offerings of this kind should be male or female, and whether it should be the first-born or not.' Does not this seem naturally to imply, that they were still to offer burnt-offerings of this kind to God, but that the remission or

mitigation consisted in this, that they were left at liberty to offer any of their children, male or female, first-born or not? Thus I took it, and thus it was obvious to understand it, especially considering his manner of introducing it, that 'this law was very much mitigated or rather repealed:' a way of speaking which no man would have chosen that had intended plainly and clearly to signify, that it was totally and absolutely abrogated and repealed, and that they were under no obligation to offer any human sacrifices at all. And yet, because I had thus understood it, he talks of my being transported beyond all the bounds of truth, reason, or conscience; that all my friends must blush for me. And he very gravely asks, 'does this man believe a God or a judgment to come?' I so far believe it, that I would not, for any worldly consideration, be guilty of such falsehoods and gross misrepresentations as I take this writer to be guilty of, and even in the management of this very argument. In order to make it answer his end, he represents it as if the law concerning God's claiming or reserving the first-born of Israel as holy to himself, was one law; and the law concerning their redeeming the first-born, was another law; see p. 123, and that the law concerning redeeming them was a repeal of the law by which God claimed them to himself. But this is entirely misrepresented; for in the very original law relating to this matter, where God challenges the first-born as his, they are expressly commanded to redeem the first-born of man, at the same time that they are commanded to sacrifice the first-born of clean beasts. So that, as I observed in my former book, the original law which this writer refers to, *Exod. xiii.* is so far from laying the Israelites under a legal obligation to offer their first-born as sacrifices unto God, as he is pleased to represent it; that to have done so would have been the most express and manifest breach of that law.* As to what he pretends, that the first-born among men were said to be holy to the Lord, as well as the first-born among clean beasts, and that this signifies, that they were both set apart as holy to the Lord in the same sense, that is, they were both to be sacrificed; this is very strange, when that very law expressly provides, that the first-born among clean beasts were to be sacrificed, and the first-born among men were not to be sacrificed, but redeemed. But he adds, that 'this is the more evident, because when the Levitical males came to be substituted for the first-born of the other tribes, the expression is quite altered; and it is not said, they shall be holy to the Lord, as the others were before; but they shall be mine, i. e. my chief servants or peculiar favourites.' Here we have another specimen of the sincerity of this writer, and how much he is to be trusted in his account of things. He boldly affirms, and lays a great stress upon it, that the expression, when speaking of the Levitical males, is quite altered from what it was in the law concerning the first-born; for in the one case it is said, they shall be holy to the Lord; in the other God declares, they shall be mine. If this had been true, the observa-

* See *Divine Authority*, pp. 90, 91.

tion would have been low and trifling, and would have proved nothing at all. Since I suppose he will hardly say, that a person or thing's being holy to the Lord is a proof of its being to be offered to God in sacrifice; or that when it is said, as it often is, concerning the priests, that they were holy to the Lord, it signifies they were to be sacrificed, see Lev. xxi. 6, 7. But it happens, that what the author so confidently affirms, is entirely false. For in the original law concerning the redemption of the first-born, it is said of them, as of the Levites afterwards, 'they are mine,' Exod. xiii. 2, 12. And in the very passage he refers to, where the Levitical males were taken instead of the first-born of the children of Israel, as it is said, the Levites shall be mine, it is immediately added, 'because all the first-born are mine,' Numb. iii. 12, 13. I need not take any notice of the way he pretends to account for the Israelites being brought into the settling the priesthood, &c. in the tribe of Levi, viz. because they were hereby freed from the obligation they were under of sacrificing their first-born. This goes upon the supposition, that they looked upon themselves as having been legally obliged to sacrifice their first-born by that very law that enjoined them not to sacrifice their first-born, but to redeem them; a thing, that as stupid as they were, could not have entered into their heads, but was a discovery reserved for the extraordinary sagacity and penetration of this writer.

He next proceeds to the case of Abraham, pp. 126, &c. which I had considered fully and distinctly. He has not thought proper to answer what was offered, but thinks it sufficient to represent me as going upon if's and may-be's; and no doubt, this will be esteemed a full confutation of my whole reasoning on this subject.

But he urges, that it is the most absurd and ridiculous supposition in the world, that God himself should command this to try what Abraham would do in such a case, as if God did not know as well without it. But it is not pretended, that it was for his own information that God did this, nor is this ever the meaning of the phrase of his trying persons, which is frequently made use of in the sacred writings; but it was to give Abraham an opportunity of discovering to the world the excellent temper of his mind, and exhibiting a lasting example to all ages. And this author himself owns, p. 128, that 'it served to show the strength and invincibility of Abraham's faith and trust in God, and that he was ready to do any thing, or part with any thing, at his command.' p. 128.

The way he takes to account for Abraham's conduct in this matter is one of the most extraordinary that ever was invented. The Canaanites, it seems, told him, that if he would sacrifice his own son, God would raise him from the dead, and they would worship the God of Abraham, and be of his religion, p. 129. And Abraham was such a fool, as upon this, and no other foundation, to entertain a strong and indubitable persuasion and impression upon his mind, that God would do as the Canaanites had said, yea, and fancied that God appeared to him, and commanded him to sacrifice his own beloved son Isaac, the heir of all the promises. And if all this was

merely owing to the strength of his own fancy, no account can be given why this indubitable enthusiastic persuasion did not carry him actually to execute it.

I had showed the great absurdity of supposing, that Abraham's believing he had such a command from God was owing to the force of his own enthusiasm.* Our author, without troubling himself to answer what had been alleged to this purpose, pronounces that it was an irrational enthusiastic persuasion, which God himself could never have been the author of; and to show that it was so, he urges, that Abraham, according to the representation made of it by the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, was persuaded that God would certainly raise his son from the dead, if he sacrificed him; whereas says he, it is certain that God had never intended or promised any such thing. It will be easily allowed, that God had not promised it. Nor if he had, would Abraham's self-denial, and trust in God, and submission to his will in this instance, been so illustrious. But he had promised, that in Isaac should his seed be called; and he did not doubt, but that promise would be accomplished in God's own way. And when he received the command about sacrificing his son, he reasoned with himself as the apostle to the Hebrews represents it, Heb. xi. 19, not that God had promised to raise his son, but that he was able to raise him from the dead; and he concluded, that God would do this rather than fail of the accomplishment of his promise. There is nothing in this, but what is just and sober reasoning, and which shows a calm and steady temper of mind, a sound judgment, as well as eminent faith and trust in God, as I observed, *Divine Authority*, p. 93.

As this writer thinks fit to charge this upon Abraham's enthusiasm, so he gives us a plain hint, that he looks upon all the promises and appearances of God to Abraham, and consequently the covenant founded upon them, to have been nothing else but wild enthusiasm. For he intimates, that if Abraham was mistaken in this, he might be in other cases too, where he depended on any immediate revelation or communication from God, p. 129. So that this father of the faithful, so much celebrated by St. Paul, and of whom our author himself frequently affects to speak with respect, was the father of visionaries and enthusiasts. However, he has here let us know his own opinion, and it may go as far as his authority goes; but the instance he produces proves the quite contrary of what he pretends to prove by it. For he refers to the prediction made to Abraham, that 'his seed should be strangers, oppressed and afflicted in a land that was not theirs, and at the end of four hundred years should come out with great substance, and come to the land of Canaan,' Gen. xv. 13, 16. He wants to know whether this be supposed to be a prophecy, or a conditional promise. I answer that it was a prophecy or prediction, and not merely a promise. For that his seed should be afflicted, &c. could not be a promise. But then he urges, that it was not accomplished. And in order to make this appear, he is

* See *Divine Authority*, p. 95, &c.

pleased to represent it, as if it had been promised or foretold, that at the end of the four hundred years, they were to be put into the quiet, peaceable possession of the land for ever, or throughout all their generations, p. 129. But there is no such thing there promised or foretold. All that is there said is, that at the end of four hundred years, they, Abraham's posterity, shall come hither again, that is, to the land of Canaan; but how they were to possess it, whether in a quiet and peaceable way, or by war, or how long they were to continue there, is not said. But what is immediately there added, as a reason for their not coming thither sooner, viz. that the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full, seems plainly to intimate, that it was to be by the expulsion of the Canaanites, who were then to be exemplarily punished for their iniquities. All which was punctually and literally fulfilled.

As to what he observes from Dr. Hyde, that this case of Abraham was the original or first occasion of human sacrifices all over the east; there is no proof of this. And Abraham's case rather furnished a manifest proof, that human sacrifices were what God would not accept, since though he was pleased to lay this injunction upon him for the trial of his faith and obedience, yet he expressly forbade him, by a voice from heaven, to execute it. Concerning which, see Divine Authority, pp. 91, 101.

CHAPTER VII.

What he offers to show that the whole power of the government, by the Mosaic constitution, was vested in the tribe of Levi, examined. His vain attempt to vindicate what he had said concerning the priests having twenty shillings in the pound upon all the lands of Israel. The falsehood and extravagance of his computations shown. The burden of the legal priesthood not the cause of the revolt of the ten tribes from Rehoboam. The law of Moses did not forbid all inquiries into the reasons of its injunctions. Reasons for several of those injunctions given in the law itself. Sabiisme prohibited in the law of Moses, which was the most ancient kind of idolatry that prevailed among the eastern nations.

OUR author next proceeds to vindicate what he had said concerning the power and revenues of the priesthood under the law of Moses. He is pleased to declare, p. 135, that my 'pretence, that he had asserted that the Levites were exempted, by law, from the common jurisdiction of the law; and what I say upon it, pp. 106, 107, is nothing but forgery and abuse.' I did not charge him with asserting, that the Levites were exempted by law, from the jurisdiction of the law; for he had not used those words, by law, and I kept religiously to his own words in citing him. But I charged him with asserting that 'the Levites, though servants in the temple, had greater rights and immunities than any prince or first magistrate of another tribe, and that Levi

was a tribe exempted from the jurisdiction of the law, and protected against it.' See *Mor. Philos.* vol. i. p. 141. The falsehood of this was plainly shown, and that in that constitution the Levites, or priests, were not exempted from the jurisdiction of the law more than any other persons. Our author answers all that I had offered by saying, that this is nothing but forgery and abuse. A very compendious answer this! and which must no doubt, pass, with every intelligent reader, for an effectual confutation of the proofs I had brought.

But he is pleased to mention some of the legal privileges, in which the meanest of the Levites were superior to the Princes, &c. of the other tribe. See pp. 133, 135. One of them is, that they could not be obliged to civil offices, nor to bear arms. And at this rate he may also undertake to prove, that the meanest clergyman, or curate or teacher, allowed by the act of toleration, has greater privileges and immunities than the greatest magistrate in the nation. As to what he saith farther there concerning their receiving all the revenues of the nation; this is not true, except by it be meant only their receiving the tithes, and other dues. And whereas he adds, that they were only 'Lords and Judges, and not common subjects;' I suppose he will hardly pretend that this was a privilege belonging to the meanest of the Levites, and that in a more eminent degree than to the princes and first magistrates of other tribes. He urges, indeed, p. 135, that 'the court was entirely levitical, and therefore the Levites might easily evade the jurisdiction of the law in common cases.' And this he has the confidence to affirm, notwithstanding the clear proof that was brought, and to which he has not been able to return the least answer, that the inferior judges, who were appointed by Moses to judge the people in the lesser causes, and the seventy elders that were appointed to judge in the more difficult and important cases, were chosen out of all the tribes, and not that of Levi only. It was shown, that by the acknowledgment of all the Jews, the great Sanhedrim, or supreme council of judicature, was to consist not merely of priests and Levites, but of any other persons, of other tribes, that were qualified by their knowledge of the law; without which qualification, even the high-priest himself had no right to sit there, by virtue of his birth or place.

Page 133, he repeats what he had said before, that the supreme power was in the high-priest, by the Mosaic constitution; and that this is so very evident, that I could not deny it. And yet he knows I did deny it, and showed that Moses himself, who was not the high-priest, had the government in his hands during his own life-time; and that he appointed Joshua, who was not a high-priest, nor of the tribe of Levi, to succeed him in the government of the people. And afterwards the supreme power was vested in the judges, who were extraordinarily raised, and appointed by God. And the nation continued generally under their government some hundreds of years. And when there happened to be no such judge governing them, it is represented as a state of anarchy; and that every man did what was right in his own eyes; though all the while there was an high-

priest among them : nor was any one of those judges a high-priest except Eli ; nor any of them, so much as of the tribe of Levi, except Eli and Samuel. And as to the kings who succeeded the judges in the government of the people, our author himself acknowledges, that the high-priest had not the supreme power in their time. But then he pretends, that the people's throwing off the supreme power, vested in the high-priest by the law of Moses, was a fundamental breach of their constitution, and a rejecting God from being their king. But this is wrongly represented. It was not the throwing off the power of the high-priests, who still continued to exercise their office, under the kings, as much as before, that is represented under this idea ; but it was the throwing off the government by judges, who were officers extraordinarily raised up, and appointed by God himself, to judge and govern the people, and instead of them, choosing to be governed by kings, after the manner of other nations, who should succeed one another, in the government, in a lineal descent. But notwithstanding this, they still continued to acknowledge the Lord for their God, and still continued to be his people, in a special sense, bound to the observation of the Mosaic covenant and polity ; the main of which still subsisted, after that alteration in their form of government, as well as before. Nor is it true, which this writer suggests, that thenceforth it was to no purpose to ask counsel of God, or consult the oracle, when the high-priest was become subject. For it is certain they still continued to ask counsel of God, under their kings ; and had his direction, both by the oracle of Urim, of which instances were given,* and by prophets, extraordinarily inspired from time to time. As to what he here again repeats concerning the God of Israel's being only a local, oracular, tutelar Deity, the residential God of that country, the palpable absurdity of this hath been already shown. See above, pp. 370, &c. to which I refer the reader, that I may not, like this author, clog him with continual repetition.

He next proceeds to vindicate what he had said in his former book, 'that it would be easy to prove that the church revenues, under this government, amounted to full twenty shillings a pound, upon all the lands of Israel. I had called this a wild assertion : and I think so still. But our author, after desiring the reader to observe it as a specimen of my uncommon talents, and that this 'shows I never rented an estate myself, and paid the rent ;' which, to be sure, must be allowed to be a manifest proof of my talents as a writer ; proceeds to prove, that 'the revenue to the priests could not amount, by law, to less than an annual rent upon the lands, which he explains to be a third part of the yearly produce or real value of the land, besides what the priests and Levites might extort by the power and privileges granted them.

I must own that I understood him that the whole yearly value of the land went to the priests ; and though this appeared to me a very strange assertion, yet I thought it not too extravagant for this writer in his rant against the priests. But now he has reduced

* See Divine Authority, pp. 138, 139.

it to a third of the real yearly produce or value of the land ; and allows, that the ' people might live under it as well as a great part of this and other nations live now under a rack-rent.' It must be considered, that the Israelites had, all of them, by their original constitution, their lands free inheritance : nor could their lands be so alienated, but that they were to return to them and to their families at the year of jubilee. By their original constitution they paid no other taxes but the tithes, and other dues, for maintaining the Levites, priests, and keeping up the public worship. They had no taxes, or tribute, imposed upon them, till they came under the government of their kings ; which was a government of their own choosing. For their judges, though they had great power and authority to judge and govern them, yet did not put them to much expense by the splendour of courts, nor by keeping up standing forces. Whereas the people of England not only pay the annual rent to their landlords, but taxes to the state, of several kinds, besides the dues to the clergy ; and among other dues, tithes ; and yet they are far from being so miserably poor and indigent, or so mightily impoverished, as he would persuade us the Israelites were by their original constitution. But let us attend to our author's computations.

And first : he makes the one tenth, that is, the tenth of corn, wine, oil, fruits, &c. to be equivalent to three tenths of the annual rent of the land ; because it was neat and free from labour and expense in cultivation and tillage. And if it had not come neat and free from the expense of cultivation, it could not have been called a tenth at all, or have been of any great advantage to them. But he adds, that after this had been taken away, the priesthood had a tenth of all the beasts, clean and unclean, and the firstborn of all beasts, which he puts as a tenth more : though, he says, it might easily be proved, that it much exceeded a tenth. But he reckons both together as two tenths, or a fifth. And then he adds, that ' since the stock upon a landed estate must, upon an average, amount to, at least, two annual rents, a fifth of this will be two fifths, or four tenths, of the annual rent, which, with the other three, make seven tenths.' Here we may observe his great accuracy in his computations. First, he supposes, an estate in land to be entirely under tillage or vintage, so that the corn and fruits upon it make up the entire value or profit of the land, and one tenth of that is equivalent to three tenths of the annual rent ; and then he supposes the same land to be stocked with cattle to the value of two annual rents, so that two tenths of the beasts upon it came to four tenths of the annual rent. So that the very same land, in the same year, both completely under tillage, and under pasturage ; and this is the supposition he makes concerning the whole country ; which, without pretending to any extraordinary skill in these matters, one may venture to pronounce to be a great absurdity. But the author is under a necessity, and he must suppose it, in order to make up his calculation. Another fault in his calculation is, that he affirms, that the Levites had a

tenth of all the beasts, clean or unclean, which is not true; for no tithes were paid of unclean beasts at all, but only of the flock and herd, Lev. xxvii. 32. And of these, again, it was only a tithe of the increase that was paid annually. For the same cattle were not tithed again every year; so that it was really a tithe of the young ones, the calves and lambs, or kids, that were brought forth that year; and this is far from being equivalent to a tenth of the grown cattle every year, or of the whole stock upon the land. To which it may be added, that what fell short of the number ten, which might often happen to be the case among the poorer sort that followed agriculture, was not titheable; or if they had above ten, whatever was short of the number twenty, paid only one tithe: and all these things will very much reduce his calculation. And then, again, it is very wrong in him to make the first-born of the beasts to be equivalent to a tenth of all the beasts, or of the whole stock upon the land in value, or, as he states it, equivalent to two tenths of the whole annual rent. For it must be considered, first, that it was only the first-born males that were to be given to the priests, which is but one half of the first-born; and, in the second place, that the first-born, e. g. of sheep or kine, were only to be considered as young lambs or calves.* And, I suppose, he will hardly undertake to prove, that supposing the first-born male lambs or calves to be a tenth in number of all the lambs and calves, that they were a tenth in value of the whole stock of sheep and cattle upon the land. And yet he absurdly accounts them so; and pretends, it could easily be proved, that it much exceeded the tenth in value. As to the first-born of unclean beasts, they were allowed to redeem them, if they pleased, with a lamb, or otherwise to kill them, if they thought them not worth it; in which case the priests got nothing at all. So that the value of the first-born of any of those creatures that were not to be sacrificed, whether of an ass, which was the most common in these countries, and is therefore particularly mentioned in the law to this purpose, Exod. xiii. 13; Deut. xviii. 16, or of a horse or camel, or any other creature, that was not to be sacrificed, was never to be rated above that of a young lamb.

But let us follow our author: he observes, that 'besides this the tribe of Levi had a very considerable share of the cities, towns, villages, and lands themselves, which, by computing from the places given and allotted to them by law, would seem to amount to a seventh part, at least, of the whole country; but I shall put it only at a tenth; and this, with what has been computed before, will make eight tenths of annual rent.' They had indeed forty-eight cities allowed them, which fell to them by lot. And if we may judge by what was allowed them out of the tribes of Judah, Benjamin, and Simeon, whose share came as it is reckoned, Josh.

* On the eighth day they were appointed by law to give the first-born, though not before, Exod. xxii. 30, that is, when it was eight days old, they might give it, though they might keep it longer. And it was a general rule, with regard to all their sacrifices, whether of bullocks, or sheep, or goats, that they were accepted for sacrifice from eight days old. Lev. xxii. 27.

xv. xviii. xix., to 155 cities, out of which the Levites had thirteen allotted them, Josh. xxi. 4, which amounts to about a twelfth part, supposing all the cities belonging to those tribes to be expressly mentioned, which is uncertain; and if they had more cities than are there reckoned, the share of the Levites will be still less in proportion. It is true, that the share of the Levites in the other tribes, seems to be greater in proportion to the number of cities expressly assigned to these tribes. But it is manifest, and allowed by the more judicious commentators, that all the cities belonging to the several tribes are not distinctly mentioned, but only the principal. For there are some cities mentioned afterwards as belonging to those tribes, that yet are not reckoned at first in the number of the cities that are expressly named as allotted to those tribes.* So that we may justly suppose it was pretty much in the same proportion in all the tribes, especially considering the rule laid down by Moses, Numb. xxxv. 8, when he appointed that forty-eight cities should be allotted to the Levites, viz. that from them that had many cities they should give many; and from them that had few cities they should give few; and that every one should give of his cities unto the Levites, according to his inheritance which he inherited. And, therefore, we may judge that the cities were given to them out of all the tribes in pretty near to the same proportion, which may be reckoned to about a twelfth. But then it must be considered, that if they had a twelfth, or even a tenth, of the number of cities allotted them, they were very far from having a twelfth or even a fiftieth part of the whole land or country. For the Levites had only the bare cities given them, and no adjoining towns or villages; as it was in the lots of the other tribes, where it is still mentioned, that they had such and such cities given them, with the villages, or adjoining and dependent towns. And most of those cities at that time were very small. Nor were the cities of the Levites to be afterwards enlarged beyond those walls any farther than a thousand cubits, to which they were expressly confined for the suburbs, and two thousand cubits for the fields; and this never to be exceeded,† see Numb. xxxv. 4, 5; Lev. xxv. 34. So that the whole of the land allowed them, reckoning from the walls of the city for the suburbs and fields, was but fifteen yards on every side, which is considerably less than a mile; and this they were not to enlarge or exceed. For all, without those bounds, belonged to the tribe where their lot lay. So that if there were an accurate computation made, all the land allowed to the priests and Levites would amount to a very small part of the country.

He next mentions the stated legal fees, as he calls them, which he says were very extraordinary: ‘as for a woman after her lying-

* See Bishop Patrick on Joshua xviii. 28; xix. 7, 16, 23, 31, 39.

† The Jews observe, that ‘in the Levites’ cities they might not make of a city the suburbs, nor of the suburbs a city, nor of the suburbs a field, nor of a field suburbs; but they were all to continue as they were, without being altered.’ See Maimon. in *Jobel*, cap. 13, sect. 4, 5, as cited by Ainsworth in *Lev. xxv. 34*.

in, and when she came to be churched, for persons that had been cured of any foul disease, and many other instances too long to be enumerated here. And, in any such cases, if a lamb of a year old had been ordered, and the person could not give it, or was not worth it, they must give a couple of turtles, two young pigeons, a tenth-deal of flour, or what they could, if ever so little. So that if a man was poor, the priest would take all, and could have no more.' And he adds, that the occasional fines for legal accidental uncleanness, which might be unavoidable, and almost innumerable, can be reduced to no certain calculation at all,' p. 138. I shall consider this matter distinctly, that it may appear how little there is in this writer's general clamours.

As to what he talks about the churching of women, as he calls it, the richest were to bring no more than a lamb of the first year (by which we are to understand not a lamb of a year old, as this author represents it, as if it was necessarily to be a year old when it was offered; but the meaning is, that it was never to be above a year old, but it was fit to be offered from eight days old, as I have already observed) and a young pigeon. And the priest's fees in that case were but small. For, as to the lamb, it was expressly ordered to be consumed by fire; and of which the priest was not to eat any thing. And even of the young pigeon which fell to the priest's share, part was to be consumed on the altar for a sin-offering, Lev. xii. 6, 8. And this was all the priest had in this case, even from the rich. As to what he talks about persons that had been cured of any foul disease; men or women that had any disease of uncleanness by issues, were obliged to bring no more than two young pigeons or turtle-doves. And of these one was to be for a burnt-offering, and to be all consumed; of the other, which came to the priest's share, part was to be consumed on the altar, as in the former case; see Lev. xv. The case in which the costliest sacrifice was required from any person that was legally unclean, was that of a person that had the leprosy, which was the highest kind of uncleanness: and in this case, the priest's share came to two lambs, which were to be offered as a sin-offering and a trespass-offering, some of which was consumed upon the altar, and the greater part came to the priest. But if the man was poor, there was only one he-lamb brought for a trespass-offering, and one young pigeon for a sin-offering. As to the three tenth-deals of flour, which were then to be offered for a meat-offering, amounting to about three pottles of flour, it was to be wholly consumed, and the priest got none of it.

These kinds of uncleanness that have been now mentioned, were the only kinds for which sacrifices were offered, as is evident from the law itself, and the Jews universally acknowledge. And with regard to the leprosy, and a distemper by an unclean issue in man or woman, it is to be presumed that there were many of the Israelites that never had them at all. And, as to the other kind of legal uncleanness mentioned, viz. that of a woman in child-bed, it is to be supposed that it seldom came above once in a year, and

for the most part, not so often. In all other cases of legal impurity and uncleanness, which were many, and which the author pronounces to be 'almost innumerable,' e. g. the uncleanness of touching any unclean thing, the carcase of an unclean beast, or a human dead body, &c. they were purified merely by washing or sprinkling; which brought nothing to the priest: see Lev. xi. 24, 31. Numb. xix. 16, 17, 18, 19; and no sacrifices were to be offered on these accounts at all; except where persons inadvertently came in their uncleanness into the sanctuary, and did eat of the holy things, i. e. the peace-offerings, and afterwards came to know it. For of such persons and cases that passage is to be understood, Lev. v. 2, 3 by the consent of all the Jewish doctors;* nor indeed can it well be otherwise understood, if we compare it with the places I have just referred to. In such cases the richest were to bring no more than a she-lamb or a she-goat for a trespass-offering; and, if they were very poor, no more was required of them than to bring the tenth part of an ephah of fine flour, i. e. about a pottle, without oil or frankincense. See Lev. 6, 7, 11: so that this was made easy to the poor. And we may reasonably suppose that this was not a case that often happened: for it could only happen when they came into the sanctuary, which, with regard to the generality of the Israelites, was but at their great festivals, which were only celebrated three times a year; and they were then generally very scrupulously exact in shunning all ceremonial uncleanness. With regard to many of the other cases in which sacrifices were required to be offered, e. g. the trespass offerings, Lev. vi. 2—7, it is not to be doubted, that there were several persons in Israel that seldom or never committed the crimes for which those sacrifices were appointed. The peace-offerings were by far the most numerous of any other; which were free-will-offerings in acknowledgment of mercies received, or in accomplishment of some vow they had made; but, besides that, these were at the people's own election, they cannot be properly reckoned among the revenues due to the priests, who had but a small share of them: the far greater part of these offerings fell to the people themselves on whose account they were offered, who feasted upon them with their families. And as to the burnt-offerings, the priest got nothing but the skin. It appears from this account of the Mosaical sacrifices, that they were far from bringing in such vast revenue to the priests, as this author represents it.

But he has another shift in order to make up his twenty shillings in the pound paid by the people to the priests; and that is, 'that there was a very great and enormous poll-tax laid upon the whole nation, and to be paid in money: every male, from twenty to sixty, was to pay half a shekel three times a year, when they went up to the sanctuary. And here the poorest man was rated as high as the richest; and no abatement to be made on account of circumstances. At the same time no man was to appear before the Lord,

* Concerning which see Ainsworth in Lev. v. 2.

the priest, empty-handed ; but every one was to bring his offering, or present, with him ; which, besides the loss of time and hindrance of labour, could not amount to much less than what was to be paid in money,' p. 139.

This furnishes us with a new instance how little this writer's representations are to be trusted, especially where the law of Moses, or the priests, are concerned. It is, indeed, required in the law, that at the public festivals, when they came up to the sanctuary, they were not to appear before the Lord empty, *Exod. xxiii. 15. Deut. xvi. 16.* But there is not one word of their making any present to the priest ; nor did any of the Jews ever understand it so. Their doctors particularly understand it of a burnt offering, either of beast or fowl, according as they were best able to do it, which they were to offer the first day of the feast ;* and this was consumed by fire ; and consequently the priest did not get any part of the flesh of it to his share. Besides which, the people commonly offered their free-will-offerings at those feasts ; and these were left to every man's own inclination and ability, according as the Lord had blessed him, *Deut. xvi. 16* ; and upon these the people themselves feasted with their families, and but a small share of them came to the priest. And, indeed, those were looked upon as seasons of universal joy and festivity, in which the whole nation met and rejoiced together, at the same time commemorating the great things God had done for them ; and the observing these festivals was looked upon as a privilege. And something of this kind, accompanied with an intermission of their labours, has been usual in almost all nations.† But as to this author's pretence concerning ' the enormous poll-tax,' as he calls it, which every male, from twenty to sixty, was to pay three times a year at their solemn festivals, half a shekel each time, i. e. a shekel and half in the whole ; this is entirely his own fiction, without any thing either from the law of Moses, or from any of the Jewish writers to support it. It was, indeed, the command of God to Moses, that when he should take the ' sum of the children of Israel after their number,' every one of them that was numbered, should give half a shekel for an offering unto the Lord ; and that this money should be appointed for the service of the tabernacle of the congregation, *Exod. xxx. 12—16* : which was accordingly executed, *chap. xxxviii. 25, 26.* But this numbering was not at any of their solemn feasts : nor was there any appointment made that there should be any annual payment of this kind for the future. All that appears there is, that it was ordered for the present building the sanctuary. It is true, that in after times, particularly under the second temple, every Jew above twenty years old, was obliged to pay half a shekel annually ; and the Jewish doctors found this upon that original appointment of Moses. But this will not at all answer the author's design. For first, it was but half a shekel that was paid yearly ;

* See Ainsworth in *Exod. xxiii. 15.*

† See *Arist. lib. viii. ad Nicomach. cap. 2,* and a remarkable passage in *Strabo* to this purpose, *Geograph. lib. x. p. 467.*

whereas he makes it to have been a shekel and a half; and then it was not paid, as he pretends it was, at any of their public feasts; but was collected by persons appointed for that purpose in their several cities; who were to return their payments into the public treasury by the 25th of the month Adar, which answers to our February. Nor was it a tax, as he represents it, paid by the people to the priests: but the priests and Levites themselves were as much obliged to pay it, by the Jewish constitutions, as any others; and the design of it was for public service. Out of this money they provided for the expense of the public sacrifices offered in the name of all the people; both the daily oblations, and those offered on the sabbaths, new moons, and solemn festivals; as also salt, wood, incense for the sacrifices, the sacerdotal vestments, salaries of several public offices, the reparation of the temple, building or repairing walls, aqueducts, towers, and other public works which required a great expense: so that sometimes the money was not sufficient to defray it. And if any of the money was left, it was not to be put into the pockets of private persons, but was all to be laid out in extraordinary burnt offerings, which were called 'the second sacrifices of the altar.'*

Our author is not content to have forged a poll-tax of a shekel and a half, and made it part 'of the vast revenue of the priests;' though it was but half a shekel that was paid, and was a tax upon the priests, as well as others, for the public service; but in order to heighten it, he thinks proper to raise the shekel to four times the value. He himself owns that it answered by weight to two shillings and eight pence of our money; and all those that have made the most exact computations, have given pretty much the same account of it:† and yet, presently after, by a pretended comparing it with other things, he thinks it ought to be valued at twelve shillings of our money; but he is so modest as to be willing it should be reckoned at no more than ten. His reason for thus enhancing the value of a shekel from half a crown to ten shillings, is, that two shekels was the price fixed, by the law, for the best fat sacrificial sheep. But this doth not appear. There is no price fixed, by law, for such sheep at all; nor can it be supposed that they were always of the same price: though if it had been fixed at that rate, it would only have followed, that sheep were very common in that country, and very cheap; which is certainly true. He adds, that 'fifty shekels was the price fixed for a man slave, and thirty for a woman,' Lev. xxviii. But that law is not intended at all to fix the prices at which slaves whether male or female, were to be sold in the market; as if no slaves were ever to be sold among the Jews for a greater price than is there mentioned. They sold them there, as in other countries, for what they could get, or what they were worth; which was sometimes more, sometimes less. Maimonides supposes

* The reader may see all this fully shown, out of the most authentic Jewish writings, by Mr. Selden, *De Jure Nat. et Gent. lib. iv. cap. 5, et De Synedr. lib. iii. cap. 10. sect. 2, 3, 4.*

† See Bishop Cumberland of Scripture weights and measures, chap. 4.

a servant 'might be sometimes worth a hundred pounds, and sometimes not one.' See Ainsworth in *Exod.* xxi. 32. But that law, *Lev.* xxvii., relates to the case of persons that had made a singular vow, as it is called, *ver.* 2, which was a voluntary thing, to which no man was obliged, whereby they vowed their own persons, or their children, or any that belonged to them in property, to be the Lord's, for the service of his sanctuary, to assist in some meaner ministrations, &c. In which case they were excused from the actual performance of the service, and only obliged to pay the valuation put upon them; and this valuation or estimation of their persons was not arbitrary, left to the pleasure of the priest, but was fixed by a law at a certain rate never to be exceeded in any case, in order to prevent any imposition upon them; though it was to be diminished if they were poor, and the priest was in that case to estimate in proportion to the man's ability that had vowed, *ver.* 8. And the money arising from these estimations did not go to the private use of the priest, nor was any part of his revenue, but, like the half-shekel, went to the repairing of the house of God, and other public uses, 2 *Kings* xii. 4—10.*

Thus I have distinctly considered every thing our author has offered to make good his charge of 'twenty shillings in the pound upon all the lands of Israel,' and by which he undoubtedly intended to expose the priests and the Mosaic constitution, but has only exposed himself, and shown that he will stick at no artifices or misrepresentations to gain his point. I need not take notice of his following computations, pp. 140, 141, and which are all built upon the false and absurd suppositions he had made before. I shall only observe, that according to his usual way, he repeats what he had said in his former book, that the ten tribes revolted from Solomon because of the oppression they were under by the law relating to the priesthood, and that therefore they never submitted to this law or priesthood more, p. 140. This is entirely his own fiction; since it was the yoke of taxes that Solomon laid upon them which they complained of; and we find no complaint made by them concerning the priesthood. And though, through the policy of their kings, they were not suffered to go up to worship at the temple at Jerusalem, yet the ten tribes had still a priesthood among them to whom they paid tithes; and they still continued to offer sacrifices and free-will offerings as prescribed in the law of Moses. Concerning which, see 'Divine Authority,' p. 192.

In p. 142, he passes by what I had said concerning the nature, end, and use of expiatory sacrifices under the law, and still declares, that for his 'life he cannot see that any thing was forgiven by that law, otherwise than by suffering the penalty prescribed, and thereby satisfying the law itself.' This, it must be owned, is a strange way of being forgiven, that is, by suffering the penalty prescribed. But this, he says, was the difficulty he had urged, that 'there could be no pardon where no punishment or legal demand is remitted;' and

* See Maimon. in *Crachin.* cap. 1, l. 10.

of this, he pretends, I had not been 'able to give one instance,' p. 142. But it was plainly shown, that in that constitution sacrifices were supposed to avert the penalty that would otherwise have been due. And therefore, in cases where it was necessary for the good of the community, that the penalty should be actually inflicted for any particular crimes, sacrifices were never appointed to be offered for those crimes; and in cases where sacrifices were appointed, the penalty that would otherwise have been due was remitted, of which instances were given.* And upon the man's confessing his fault, and offering the sacrifice in the manner prescribed, it was declared, that the 'sin he had committed was forgiven him.' He was thenceforth clear and free in the eye of the law from the guilt he had contracted. But here, perhaps, I shall be told again, that the sin that was forgiven the man upon offering his sacrifice was the sin of not offering his sacrifice, the absurdity of which has been already exposed. See above, pp. 113, 114.

Our author, who in his former book had asserted, that Moses in his law made no distinction between morals and rituals; but urged all alike merely as the positive will of God, without ever giving any other reason for it, now is pleased to acknowledge that Moses as well as the prophets, urges the reasonableness and fitness of the moral law, though it seems he only did this as a prophet or preacher of righteousness.† But he denies, that as to the ritual law, Moses ever urged it from the 'reasonableness and fitness of things, or from the justice and equity of the ways of God. And he had asserted in his former book, that the people were never to inquire into the grounds and reasons for which any of them were appointed. See Mor. Phil. vol. i. p. 256. But the contrary is evident to any one that is acquainted with the law of Moses. For with regard to several of the ritual precepts, the reasons of appointing them are expressly declared in the law itself, e. g. in the law of the passover, Exod. xii. 26, 27, Deut. xvi. 3, and concerning the redemption of the first-born, Exod. xiii. 14, 15, and in that concerning the Sabbath, Exod. xx. 11. xxiii. 12, and in that concerning the offering of the first-fruits, Deut. xxvi. 1—12, to which many other instances of the like kind might be added.

This writer has nothing to say for himself in vindication of the odious representation he had made of the Jews, but that their own prophets represent them as having been very wicked; that is, he applies what was said of them in the time of their greatest degeneracy and corruption to the whole nation at all times and in all ages. And whereas I had urged, that the Jews greatly exceeded other

* See Divine Authority, pp. 115, 116. To the instances there mentioned others might be added: particularly if any person presumptuously and wilfully came into the sanctuary and did eat of the holy things in his uncleanness, he was to be cut off from his people; that is, as the Jews understand this phrase, he was to be punished by the hand of God for his presumptuous disobedience, done in contempt of the law, Lev. vii. 20, 21, Numb. xix. 20. But if he did it ignorantly, and came afterwards to know it, a sacrifice was to be accepted for him, and he was, upon offering it, free from the penalty. See Ainsworth in Lev. v. 2. 3, &c.

† Concerning this pretence, see what is said above, p. 148.

nations, in that whilst they governed themselves by their law, they acknowledged and worshipped the one living and true God, free from idolatry; he says, this is a plain proof that I have never read the history of the Medes and Persians, in Dr. Hyde de Relig. vet. Persar. And he assures us, as from Dr. Hyde, that the 'Persians had never, from the very first records of time, fallen into the Sabian superstition of worshipping idols and tutelar Gods,' p. 144. The Sabian superstition properly consisted in worshipping the host of heaven, as the Hebrew word, Saba, from whence it is derived, imports. And this the Persians were guilty of. Though they were not so corrupted as to lose the knowledge of the Supreme God, yet they paid adoration to the celestial luminaries. Dr. Hyde himself acknowledges, that the 'ancient Persians to the primitive orthodox religion superadded Sabaism, paying too great a veneration to stars and elements,' cap. i. p. 2. He supposes that the most ancient Persians were instructed in the true uncorrupted worship of God by their great progenitors, Shem and Elam, but that afterwards they lapsed into Sabaism before the time of Abraham, cap. i. p. 3, 4; that that patriarch himself was educated in the Sabatical superstition, which had then spread generally through the nations, and that the Persians, as well as others, were involved in it; but that Abraham, who had many contentions with the worshippers of the stars and of fire, introduced a reformation, and with great difficulty and danger to himself, propagated the true religion in the East; and that the Persians probably learned Abraham's religion after his victory over Chedorlaomer, king of Elam, cap. iii. pp. 84, 86. He also owns, that after the time of Abraham the Persians relapsed into Sabaism again, though they still kept themselves free from image-worship, cap. i. p. 3, 5. He tells us that the Persian priests in India acknowledge a lawgiver before Zoroaster, whom they call Poreodekeshangh, who was a teacher of Sabaism, and under whom there was a diversity of religion from that which afterwards prevailed under Zoroaster, cap. i. p. 17. And after producing a testimony from a Persian writer, in which he affirms, that '*Persæ antiquo tempore erant de religione Sabaitarum, stellas colentes, usque ad tempus Gushtasp filii Lohrasp;*' that 'the Persians in ancient time were of the religion of the Sabians, worshipping the stars, till the time of Gushtasp the son of Lohrasp.' The learned doctor makes this reflection upon it; '*Tunc enim eorum religionem reformavit Zoroastres;*' that 'at that time Zoroaster reformed their religion;' that is, he reformed it from Sabaism with which it had been corrupted, cap. iii. p. 87. By this we may see what to judge of the author's accuracy or sincerity, who represents it as evident from Dr. Hyde's account, that the Persians never fell into Sabaism from the first records of their nation.

Indeed Sabaism was the eldest kind of idolatry, and which spread very early among the Eastern nations. And Moses took particular care to guard the Israelites against it, by absolutely forbidding them to pay any kind of worship to the heavenly luminaries, as was usual among other nations, and particularly among the Persians. See

Deut. iv. 19, 'Lest thou lift up thine eyes unto heaven, and when thou seest the sun,' &c.

As to what he farther saith concerning the Jews learning the doctrine of the resurrection and a future judgment from the Persians, this I had fully considered in my former book; nor has this writer brought any new proof of it, except his confidently affirming that it is so must pass for a proof. But I shall have occasion to take notice of this afterwards, for he returns to it again, and insists upon it more largely in his seventh section.

CHAPTER VIII.

The oracle of Urim and Thummim not designed to try private judicial causes. The answers of that oracle did not depend on the pleasure of the high-priest. The author's continued misrepresentation of the story of the Levite's wife, and the war with the Benjamites, detected.* The clear and circumstantial predictions of future events given by the ancient prophets, a proof of their divine inspiration. Their writings not corrupted by the after revisors and editors. The distinction between the true and the false prophets asserted against this writer's exceptions. His attempt to vindicate the charge he had brought against Samuel. A particular examination of his farther invectives against David.

HE now comes to vindicate what he had said in his former book concerning the oracle of Urim and Thummim. And he still persists in it, that it was intended and established by Moses to be the 'ultimate resort in all judicial causes, and to decide in private matters between man and man,' which I had denied. But instead of producing a proof for this, he only asks the question, 'Why might not the high-priest consult the oracle privately, in private affairs and matters of judgment, as well as publicly in public affairs?' The answer is, because the oracle in its original appointment was not designed for deciding causes between man and man, but for asking counsel of God in matters of a public nature. This appears from Numb. xxvii. 21. All the Jews with one consent have understood it so; all the instances recorded in Scripture in which this oracle was consulted, are of this kind; not one of them relates to judicial causes, nor are they once directed in the law to have recourse to Urim and Thummim, as the ultimate resort in such causes; but are directed to the priests and to the judges that should be in these days. And yet this writer will still persuade us, that to this oracle was 'the ultimate appeal in all judicial causes, by the establishment of Moses himself.' He finds fault with me for saying that 'it did not depend on the high-priest to give answer by the Urim and Thummim when he pleased, but depended on the will of God,

who might withhold his directions, by this oracle, from the chief rulers or the people, though they applied to him for this purpose.* This does not suit his scheme, who makes that oracle nothing else but the voice of the high-priest himself, who consequently had it always in his own power. And therefore he denies this, and says I can produce no authority for it. And whereas I alleged that we have an instance of this in Saul, who could obtain no answer by Urim, though he earnestly desired it, he answers, that 'it is no wonder that neither the priests nor prophets would give Saul any advice, when they were all in David's interests; and Saul could have no other way of consulting with God but by them.' But this will not do; for one of the instances wherein Saul consulted the oracle and could get no answer, was before David was so much as known or thought of for king. The high-priest whom Saul consulted was in his interests, according to this writer's own representation, for he was Ahia the son of Ahitub the grandson of Eli, whom he pretends Saul exalted to the high-priesthood instead of Samuel. He was then with Saul, and did himself propose consulting God concerning their pursuing the Philistines; and it may be gathered from what is said of this matter, that he would have been glad of a favourable answer, but could get none at all; which showed it was not in his power, nor depended upon his pleasure. And accordingly Saul himself concluded, that some sin among the people must have been the cause of it. And what followed plainly showed that the withholding the answer of the oracle could not be owing to the high-priest; for it ended in a discovery that Jonathan had unwittingly broken the solemn adjuration or curse which his father had laid upon all the people, devoting any of them to death that should eat any thing till evening. The high-priest cannot reasonably be supposed to have known this fact of Jonathan's, since none of the people that saw it would discover it, such was their affection and esteem for Jonathan; nor was it otherwise found out than by casting of lots. Or, if the high-priest had known it, it would be absurd to the last degree, to suppose that he who was a friend of Saul's would have thus contrived to promote the condemnation and death of his eldest and most beloved son, the favourite of his father and of the people, and to whom the victory of that day was principally owing. The whole affair seems plainly to have been under the immediate direction of divine providence, who ordered it so, both to show the sacredness of an oath, and to convince Saul of his great rashness in making such an adjuration. But here is a plain instance, that the voice of the oracle was a different thing from the voice of the high-priest, and did not depend upon his pleasure. See 1 Sam. xiv. 3, 36, 37, &c.

He next comes to the story of the Levite and his concubine, which he had so basely misrepresented. I considered this fully and distinctly, and he would fain seem to say something to it, but has done little more than repeat what he had said in his former book,

* See 'Divine Authority,' p. 130.

without any new force of argument, though with a greater confidence than before.

He had charged the Levite and his wife as having 'raised a mob about them,' by their ill behaviour when they came into the town of Gibeah. I had shown that this was a fiction of his own, without anything in the story to support it. Instead of retracting so groundless a charge, he still continues to say, that 'this is very probable by the circumstances of the story,' p. 151, and in the next page confidently asserts it as if it was a certain fact, but does not condescend to give the least proof of it, or to answer what was offered to the contrary. And whereas he had taken upon him to assert, that the outrage upon the Levite and his wife was committed in the middle of the night, with a view to show that the Levite was carousing till midnight, and that it could not therefore be known who the authors of the outrage were; I showed that it may be concluded from the story, that the outrage happened not long after the Levite had got into the old Ephraimite's house, which was in the evening. For the old man found them in the street as he was returning from his work at even, and took them into his house; where, after having given provender to the asses, they refreshed themselves, and whilst they were doing so, 'behold the men of the city, certain sons of Belial, beset the house,' &c. Now what does this writer say to this? He first supposes me to say that this outrage happened in the evening before night, and then sets himself very gravely to prove, that it must have been night before it happened, pp. 152, 153. But if he would have said any thing to the purpose, he should have proved that it was not till midnight, which he had taken upon him to assert in his former book; but this he quietly passes over.

He is pleased to own, that the 'insolence and rage of the mob was certainly inexcusable, and the guilty ought to have received their just punishment, could they have been found out and convicted,' p. 151. But he falls heavily upon the Levite for not having taken his remedy at law, which he assures us was open to him; and in which he might have expected the utmost favour, as the supreme power of the nation was in his tribe. And whereas I had said, there was then no judge or supreme magistrate in Israel, to whom he might apply for redress, and for the punishment of so enormous an outrage; he very boldly pronounces, that this is 'absolutely false, and such a fiction of my own, that he is astonished at it;' and he gives us his word for it, that since Phineas was high-priest, Othniel or Ehud must have been judge. I cannot say, that I am 'astonished' at his saying this; but I should have been 'astonished,' if any writer of credit or reputation had said it: for not only does the historian expressly declare, that there was no king in Israel, and that every man did that which was right in his own eyes; which is as plain a description as can well be given, that there was then no supreme magistrate in Israel, that had the power of the sword; for by the king is sometimes understood any single person that had the supreme authority, Deut. xxxiii. 5. But besides, it appears from all the cir-

cumstances of the story, that there was then no judge amongst them, or any one person that had the supreme power, though there was an high-priest; for we find that every thing was done by the elders of the congregation, as they are called, or the chief of all the people, or heads of the tribes; to their direction and appointment every thing is ascribed from first to last: nor is there the least mention of any one person to preside over them, or to be their leader, but they were obliged to consult the oracle to know who should go up first; which they needed not to have done, if there had been at that time a judge, whose office it was to lead and govern them.

There cannot be a more extravagant supposition than that which this writer has advanced, that the Levite might have had 'a remedy at law, if he had sued for it; but that he was resolved to make it a public, national quarrel, and to raise a war upon it, rather than take any peaceable legal method for redress,' pp. 150, 153. As if a poor inconsiderable Levite, who does not appear to have been a man of any note, should form a project of raising a civil war, when at the same time, he might have had justice done him in a quiet way. Nor is it a less romantic supposition, that all the tribes of Israel should engage in his quarrel, when at the same time justice might have been done, and the injury redressed, in the common legal way. But he insinuates, that it was because he was a Levite, that there was such an interest made, and a war raised upon his account; and that it is very 'plain, from the whole story, that it was not so much the injury done, as the person to whom it was done; that was the great unpardonable aggravation of the crime,' p. 155. And yet there is not the least hint of this; though he says it is very plain from the whole story. It is the atrociousness of the crime itself, that is represented as the thing which raised so general an indignation in the people, and not the least stress is laid upon its being an injury done to a Levite.

Our author takes upon him to affirm, with a confidence peculiar to himself, as if he could certainly prove it, that the 'tribe of Benjamin were never summoned to come to the assembly of the people, or to meet the other tribes while they were debating the matter; that they never had an opportunity to confront the Levite, or to clear themselves, nor time to find out and punish the guilty persons; yea, that none of them durst go, and confront, and contradict the Levite, for fear of being put to the sword.' See pp. 154, 155. All which are most absurd suppositions, contrary to all reason and common sense; as if the Israelites had, from the beginning, resolved not so much as to hear what the Benjamites had to say for themselves, and had vowed the destruction of a whole tribe, without giving them leisure to find out the criminals, when they were willing to have done it; though it does not appear that the other tribes, in the beginning of this affair, had the least quarrel or resentment against the tribe of Benjamin. The Benjamites had notice given them of the fact itself in the same way that any of the other tribes knew it; for the Levite sent equally to the twelve tribes of Israel, of which Benjamin was one. Nor can it, without great absurdity, be sup-

posed, that when all the other tribes were summoned to meet at the general assembly, the tribe of Benjamin should be neglected, that were most nearly concerned. And besides this, we are expressly told, that the children of Benjamin heard, that is, they were informed, that the children of Israel were gone up to Mizpeh, Judges xx. 5. They knew it, but they would not come. Our author's gloss upon this is very extraordinary: 'Yes,' says he, 'they heard their destruction had been resolved upon for an accidental act committed by night,' p. 152. But this is not true; for their destruction had not been resolved upon. All that they could hear was, that the tribes had met to consult and advise upon the matter: and if they had had intentions to do justice, or showed a just regard to the authority of the body of their nation, it was their business to have gone too. And if they had showed a disposition, as this author, without any proof, would persuade us they did, to find out and punish the criminals; no doubt this would have satisfied and been very acceptable to the other tribes, who showed, by their whole proceedings, how loth they were to break with the Benjamites, and how glad they would have been to have had them along with them in this affair. And hence it was, that when the Benjamites did not meet the other tribes at the general assembly, there was particular care taken to send special messengers through all the tribes of Benjamin, to persuade them to do justice, and to deliver up the criminals. And when they absolutely refused to do this, the tribes came to no resolution at all to destroy the whole tribe, but only to punish the inhabitants of Gibeah itself, that were immediately concerned in the horrid outrage. All this is fully proved in the book this author pretends to answer;* to which he has nothing to reply, but very wittily would persuade his reader, that 'I am only writing booty, with a design to betray the cause I would seem to espouse,' p. 152. And I am persuaded, if this had been the case, or if this author had thought so, he would have been much better pleased with me than now he seems to be.

He urges, that it is 'a supposition, not consistent with common sense, or even with human nature, that a whole city would choose rather to be put to the sword than give up a few infamous rioters, had they known them; or that the whole tribe would have joined with them, and supported them in this.' pp. 154, 155. And again, p. 156, he calls it 'a wild supposition, that a whole city and tribe should choose utter destruction rather than make any reasonable satisfaction, in their power, for the loss of a single life, and some slight shown to a private man.' p. 156. Let the reader observe this author's manner of expressing himself on this occasion, and how tenderly he speaks. Their offering first to abuse, in an unnatural manner, the Levite himself, and afterwards abusing and murdering his wife, 'was some slight shown to him.' Thus it is that he is for palliating so enormous a crime and outrage. As to his pretence, that it is

* See Divine Authority, p. 134, &c.

absurd to suppose, that the people of Gibeah, or tribe of Benjamin, would refuse to give up the criminals if they had known them; this is directly to contradict the history itself, which assures us, that they did refuse to deliver up the criminals when demanded, and who undoubtedly were known well enough.* And supposing them to have been persons of great interest in Gibeah, and that Gibeah had a considerable interest in the rest of the tribe of Benjamin; there is nothing in all this but what is very accountable. It is not indeed to be supposed that they would have done this, if they had foreseen the utter destruction that this brought upon them, or had known that the 'whole tribe would have been cut in pieces and totally extirpated,' as this writer expresseth it: but it doth not appear that they had any apprehension of this. It is plain, from the account given of them, that the Benjamites were bold and warlike: our author himself says that they were the 'bravest men and the best soldiers in Israel,' p. 158. And they might have such an opinion of their own skill and courage, as to think themselves a match for the other tribes, whom they perhaps regarded as an undisciplined, unwarlike multitude; especially considering the advantageous situation of Gibeah, which was seated on an eminence, in a mountainous country. They were in hopes therefore to make them soon weary of the war; and this had like to have been the case in fact.

This writer next proceeds, p. 156, to consider the part the oracle had in this affair; which is the main thing he ought to prove. I had shown that there is not the least proof, from the whole story, that the oracle had any part in any thing that was really wrong or unjustifiable in this matter. The war itself was undertaken from a noble principle, and showed a great deal of national virtue, and a just abhorrence of vice and wickedness: it was strictly justifiable, as I observed, by the law of nature and nations. Nor has this author brought any reason, though a great deal of noise to the contrary. The utter destruction of the Benjamites and their cities, that followed the last battle, was indeed very wrong and unjustifiable; but this was done in the heat of blood and resentment, after the losses they had sustained; and there is not the least proof that this was by the direction of the oracle, or that they consulted the oracle at all about it: on the contrary, the elders, or heads of the tribes, plainly charged it upon their own rashness, chap. xxi. 20. To them also is the destruction of Jabesh Gilead ascribed; who evidently had the power in their hands, and the management of the whole affair, and not to any direction from the oracle, whom they did not consult about it. Whatever was wrong therefore in these matters, was not to be charged upon the oracle, as I plainly showed;† nor has this author been able to return any answer to what was offered on these heads; yet still goes on to abuse the oracle, and is resolved that the oracle shall be charged with every thing that was

* See Divine Authority, p. 135, 136.

† Ibid. pp. 136, 137.

done from first to last, and to abuse every body that will not join with him in charging it too.

As to the question he proposes to me, p. 157, 'whether the oracle knew before-hand that the tribes, in the two first attacks, would be repulsed with the loss of forty thousand men; and whether he had then thought of the method he put them in at last, for destroying the whole city by fire and sword? if he did not know and consider both these before, he could not be infallible; and if he did, he could not be just.' How does this follow? will he pretend there could be no just reasons why God should see fit to permit that slaughter of the Israelites, supposing their cause never so just, except he knows and is able to assign those reasons? it is very evident that in the course of Divine providence, a just cause is often suffered to be oppressed for a time; and that wicked men are often suffered to vanquish those that are much better than themselves. This author talks as if, whenever any army beats another, it is a declaration of providence, that the conquerors are in the right. For he saith, that the great defeat of the Israelites, by the Benjamites, seemed to be a plain indication of providence, that the cause of the Israelites was not just, p. 157. And he has it over again, in the same page, that this, one would think, must have been a sufficient declaration from providence of the injustice of their cause; and at that rate, when they overcame the Benjamites in the third battle, it was a declaration that their cause was just, and Benjamin in the wrong. So that, according to him, providence declared the same cause to be both just and unjust. But will this author, in good earnest, undertake to prove, that it is unjust in providence ever to suffer an army to be slaughtered that are engaged in a just war, and that have the better cause; or that God can have no reasons for permitting this, though we find in fact, he frequently permits it?

He concludes what he had said about the affair of the Benjamite war, with an observation that is exactly of a piece with all the rest, and every way worthy of himself. I had said, that 'all this is commonly and justly thought to have happened between the death of Joshua and the elders who survived him, and the appointment of judges; the first of whom was Othniel.' He pronounces, that this is a very peculiar conceit. But, says he, 'there was really no such interval, nor is it thus commonly thought or supposed, by any learned man, that I know of, or by any man acquainted with the present state of chronology. It is now commonly thought, that the several intervals of servitude, mentioned in the book of Judges, must be included in the reigns of the judges themselves.' p. 159. This writer could not more effectually expose himself, than by talking at this rate. To what purpose is it to talk here of the intervals of servitude being included in the reigns of the judges, when, at the time of this war, the Israelites were not in a state of servitude at all? Sir John Marsham, who is one of the principal authors of the scheme he mentions, of including the years of servitude in the reigns of the judges, yet places the war with the Benjamites where I placed it, before Othniel, the first of the judges; and I suppose, he will allow

him to have been a learned man, and well acquainted with chronology. Archbishop Usher does the same; and I suppose he will be allowed to have been a good chronologer too.* I might add many more; nor do I know any chronologer of reputation, but what is of this opinion. ✓

He next comes to vindicate what he had said concerning the order of academical prophets, as he calls them; and, which is pleasant enough, he finds fault with me for supposing, that 'schools of the prophets were public seminaries of learning, like our universities and academies now;' which he pronounces to be a mere fiction, p. 161. But the fiction is his own; for I never supposed any such thing. I supposed them indeed to be employed in sacred exercises, in the knowledges of the law and of religion; and that they were instrumental to instruct the people, who were wont, at stated times, to have recourse to the prophets for instruction.† And this writer himself here supposes the same thing, p. 161. But I never imagined them to be professors of divinity, law, or physic; nor need he use any arguments to convince me that they were not so: though he himself, in his former book, had talked of their being 'devoted to learning, and studying history, rhetoric, poetry, and the knowledge of nature.' See *Mor. Phil.* vol. i. p. 282.

He begs leave to make two remarks before he enters on a particular consideration of what I had offered with regard to prophecy. The first is, that he had never denied the punctual circumstantial accomplishment of some of the prophecies; and that therefore what I offer on this head is nothing to the argument, so far as he is concerned in it. But I believe any one that considers the passages I had produced from his former book, will be of opinion, that he was very loth to own that the prophets were very 'particular and circumstantial in their prophecies as to time, place, persons,' &c, and therefore I thought it proper to produce several plain instances of such particular and circumstantial prophecies, and which cannot be accounted for, in the way he pretended to account for them, by mere human prudence; for he would not allow, that they had the 'knowledge of things future communicated to them in a supernatural way,' See *Moral Phil.* vol. i. pp. 288, 289. But however, I accept the author's present concession, and undertake to show, that the predictions I mentioned were of such a kind, that no human sagacity could have enabled any man to foretel them; and that there is no rational way of accounting for them, but in a way of supernatural extraordinary revelation from God himself.

Any one that reads the prophetic writings will find that they every where exhibit the noblest notions of the Deity, of his providence and perfections, and every where manifest a hearty concern for the divine glory, for the interests of piety and virtue, and a de-

* See Marsham's *Canon Chron.* sæcul. xi. Usher. *Annal. Vet. Testam.* p. mihi 42.

† See "Divine Authority," p. 140.

testation of vice and wickedness ; that the uniform tendency of all their writings, is to promote the cause of God and real religion in the world ; that with an impartial zeal, they reprove the kings, princes, priests, and the body of the people ; though thereby they exposed themselves to great sufferings and persecutions. And any one that considers this, cannot but conceive a high esteem for them as very excellent persons, filled with a zeal for goodness and righteousness ; and when he farther considers that they professed to be extraordinarily sent of God, and delivered their messages in his name, and as what they received by immediate inspiration from him ; and that, at the same time, they were enabled in many instances to give circumstantial predictions of future events, which it was impossible for human sagacity to foresee, and which could only be known to him who governs the world, whose eye penetrates through all ages, &c. This, joined with the other, furnishes an illustrious proof of their divine inspiration and mission ; that they were indeed holy men of God, who ‘spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost ;’ that therefore the highest regard is to be paid to the messages they delivered in his name, which are to be received and submitted to as of divine authority. It is nothing to the purpose to insinuate, as this writer does, p. 200, ‘that the devil, or evil spirits, can foreknow things that we are ignorant of ;’ for though we may suppose that in many cases, by their greater sagacity and experience, they may foresee and give a much more probable conjecture at future events than the wisest of men ; yet there are many of the predictions uttered by the prophets, which no evil spirits can be reasonably supposed to foreknow, except we suppose their understanding is infinite and capable of taking in the whole complexion of events ; and that they have the government of the world in their hands, and can order the affairs of men according to their will. But besides this, if we should suppose it in their power to foretel such events, it is absurd to imagine that they would lend their assistance to give authority to those prophets, and the messages they delivered in the name of God ; which were all manifestly intended, as has been shown, to restrain men from idolatry and sin, and to promote the cause of piety and virtue in the world. This writer himself, in his letter to Eusebius, pp. 61, 62, seems to own, that they might be ‘immediately inspired of God and supernaturally assisted in the knowledge of future events ; but that this cannot alter the nature and tendency of doctrines ; that notwithstanding they might be greatly mistaken, and very erroneous in doctrinals of great consequence.’ But since they delivered their messages as in the name and as by the immediate authority of God himself, with a ‘Thus saith the Lord,’ it cannot consistently be supposed that God would inspire them in so many wonderful instances with the infallible knowledge of future events, to give an authority to the messages they delivered in his name, if those messages did not indeed proceed from him, but were their own invention, abusing his sacred name and authority ; and therefore what they thus delivered under his inspiration, must be to be depended on, if the Word of God be

so. And a succession of such excellent persons, thus extraordinarily inspired from God, delivering messages in his name, all concurring to give a uniform testimony both to the divine authority of the dispensation they were then under, and to prepare men for a future dispensation that was to succeed, must have been of signal use, and have tended to give an illustrious attestation and confirmation to both.

But our author's second remark is intended to deprive us of the advantage we might have hoped to make of his seeming concession in the first; for he tells us, that 'it is very difficult, if not impossible, for us now to distinguish what was really prophetic in those writings from what is barely historical.' His meaning evidently is, that we cannot now distinguish the original predictions, as written by the prophets themselves, from the additions that were inserted afterwards; for some persons, when an event was over, might insert passages in the prophetic writings, which seemed to foretel that event, on purpose that they might pass for predictions or prophecies. Thus, notwithstanding the concession he had made of the prophets having given circumstantial predictions of future events; yet, according to him, it is impossible to prove that ever they gave such predictions. But such a loose and general charge as this proves nothing at all but the author's inclination to destroy the authority of all prophecy, which we knew well enough before.

But let us hear what he offers to confirm this. He urges, that 'it is well known to the learned, that most or all of those books have been revised and altered by after-editors, who took the liberty to add or supply what they thought fit; and therefore they might sometimes supply the particular times and circumstances in prophecies, which at first had been delivered only in general.' But this is entirely misrepresented. It is true that some learned persons have been of opinion, that Ezra and the men of the great synagogue, who revised the sacred books after the return from the Babylonish captivity, and took care for a full and correct edition of them, did here and there insert some clauses for the illustration of some particular passages in those original records.* They sometimes cast in things by way of parenthesis, for connecting and illustrating the text, in order to render the Scriptures more plain and intelligible to the people. Old names that were grown obsolete were sometimes changed for names that were better known; and where there were catalogues or genealogies, something was added, in some cases, to bring them down to their own times. These insertions are very few in number, and the sense will be found complete without them. I shall not at present inquire whether there be a just foundation for this supposition; though, as to the instances of this kind produced by the learned Dr. Prideaux, I think they are far from proving it, and that they may without much difficulty be otherwise accounted for. But not to insist upon this, I would observe, that something

* See Prideaux's *Connexion*, &c. part I. book v. pp. 343, 344, and book viii. pp. 573, 574, 4th edition.

of this kind may be admitted without weakening the authority of the sacred writings. And the revisors might be supposed to insert such clauses as these, in an entire consistency with the utmost veneration for those writings, and without intending the least corruption of them. But this is of a quite different kind from what this writer here supposes; who insinuates that the editors of the sacred books have taken such liberties, that it is impossible to know what was in those original records. And particularly with regard to the prophetic writings, they have inserted express predictions relating to particular times, persons, and circumstances, that were not in the writings of the prophets themselves. But this must have been by a designed and wilful corruption, and by forging entire prophecies after the event; which is quite a different thing from what those learned men suppose, under whose authority this writer thinks fit to cover himself. Thus, e. g. if all the predictions in the prophecies of Isaiah, that are express and circumstantial, must be supposed to have been inserted by after-editors, who revised those prophecies, they must have taken the most scandalous liberties, and have forged almost the whole prophecy. The seventh chapter of Isaiah, which contains so particular and express a prophecy concerning the destruction of Ephraim and Syria, and fixes the time for it; and the account of the child by the prophetess, with the name of the child, Maher-shalal-hash-baz; and the reason of it, that before he could say father or mother, the riches of Damascus and the spoil of Samaria should be taken away by the king of Assyria, chap. viii.; his wonderful prophecy concerning Babylon, and its being conquered by the Medes, and afterwards brought to a perpetual desolation, chap. xiii.; his predictions concerning the spoiling of Moab within three years, and of Kedar within a year, chap. xvi. xxi. and concerning the overthrow of Tyre, and its restoration at the end of seventy years, chap. xxiii.; his whole admirable prophecy concerning the sudden destruction of Sennacherib and his army, and the deliverance of Jerusalem, at a time when there was not the least likelihood of either, uttered to king Hezekiah, who sent to inquire of him concerning it, chap. xxxvii.; the whole account of his foretelling Hezekiah's recovery, and that fifteen years should be added to his life, chap. xxxviii.; and his prophecy that king Hezekiah's treasures and his posterity should be carried to Babylon, so many years before it happened, and when there was not the least prospect of such an event, chap. xxxix.; all that is foretold concerning Cyrus, and the restoration of the Jews by him, with the noble triumphs made on this occasion over all the heathen deities, as unable to foretel things to come, in the forty-fifth and several other chapters; all these things, that is, a great part of the book, must have been forged and inserted afterwards. I might observe the same thing with regard to the prophecies of Jeremiah. A large part of his book, particularly the xxv. xxvii. xxviii. xxix. xlv. xli. xlix. l. and li. chapters; all which contain several admirable and circumstantial predictions of future events, relating to particular persons by name, and to the fates of nations, of Judea, Babylon, Egypt, and other

countries, &c. must, upon this author's scheme, have been added by the editors. And the same thing might be said with regard to others of the prophets, especially Daniel. All the six last chapters of that book, and most of the former must have been one entire forgery. And indeed, I think he had better have carried his supposition a little farther, and have supposed the after-editors, as he calls them, to have forged the whole, and put an entire new body of prophecies upon the world, under the names of the ancient prophets. And yet even this would not answer his end. For let him assign what time he pleases to those editors, I will still undertake to prove, that there are several passages in those prophecies that contain predictions concerning events that happened after their time, and which it was impossible for any human sagacity to foresee.

But the truth is, his supposition is the most wild and arbitrary in the world. It is perfectly unreasonable, and has nothing to support it but a determined resolution not to believe. For first, there is no reason to think that the editors had it in their power to have corrupted the prophetic books in the manner he supposes, if they had an inclination to do it. Though the prophets had, many of them, been treated very ill by the princes and the people of the Jews in their life-time, for their impartial rebuking them for their sins and vices, and on the account of their foretelling the calamities that should befall them; yet afterwards their characters were held in a profound esteem and veneration by the whole nation, because they found their predictions had been punctually accomplished, and they were convinced that they were indeed excellent persons, who had been extraordinarily inspired of God. They themselves committed their own prophecies to writing, and they were looked upon as sacred, and preserved with care. The vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz is cited in the second book of Chronicles, chap. xxxii. 32, and appealed to as a book well known and in use. Jeremiah, by divine command, published all his own prophecies in his life-time: and when the roll in which they were written was burnt, Baruch was ordered to write them from Jeremiah's mouth a second time. See Jer. xxxvi. 2, 4, 32, xlv. 1. Besides which, several of his prophecies were expressly sent by him from Judea, to those of the Jews who were then dwelling at Babylon. See particularly chap. xxiv. li. What was said to Habbakkuk, chap. ii. 2, was equally the divine command to the other prophets, 'Write the vision.' And these writings were spread among the Jews; and they would be the more careful to preserve them, especially in the time of their captivity, as they contained predictions in which they had a near concern. Particularly, it appears from Daniel ix. 2, that he had Jeremiah's prophecies in his hands, and carefully perused them. The veneration that was universally had for the prophets, from the time of their return from the Babylonish captivity, appears from the public solemn confession made in the name of all the people, when they were assembled together. Nehem. ix. 30, where they confess that God had 'testified against them by his Spirit, in the prophets;' and acknowledge it as their great guilt, that they had not hearkened to

them. When therefore Ezra set himself to restore and settle the Jewish state, by commission from Artaxerxes, and to put every thing on a proper footing, the writings of the prophets were not new things, but writings that were already known, and to which there was paid a great regard. And therefore he could not have mangled and interpolated the prophetic writings to so strange a degree as this writer must suppose upon his scheme, but the forgery and corruption must have been detected and exposed; especially considering that Ezra had enemies, and met with considerable opposition in his intended reformation, even from several of the priests: And any others that succeeded Ezra would have found it still more difficult to have altered and corrupted those sacred books, and to have imposed them upon the Jews, both in Judea and throughout the Eastern provinces, for the true uncorrupted writings of the prophets.

But besides, it cannot reasonably be supposed, either that Ezra, or the men of the great synagogue, could have been capable of a conduct so little reconcilable to truth and honesty. Ezra, by all the accounts we have of him, and by the honourable testimony given of him by the king of Persia himself, was a person of an excellent character, and has accordingly been regarded by the whole nation ever since with the highest esteem. The men of the great synagogue were persons of eminence and worth, and who had too great a veneration for the sacred writings to be guilty of such deliberate forgery. Or, if they were capable of such a design, it cannot be conceived what inducement they had to attempt it. The prophetic writings make a disadvantageous representation of the Jews, whose great corruption and degeneracy, and particularly the corruption of the priesthood, is there described in the strongest colours. The faults of kings, princes, priests, and people are impartially related; the folly of relying upon sacrifices and other ritual parts of religion, to the neglect of substantial piety and righteousness, is strongly represented. The rejection of the Jews is foretold, and the calling of the Gentiles. It is plainly intimated, that the Mosaic economy should be abolished, and a new dispensation introduced. Can it be thought that Ezra, who was a priest, and the men of the great synagogue, who were many of them priests, would have taken such pains to forge a great number of passages, containing express circumstantial predictions, on purpose to strengthen the authority of writings which were far from giving an advantageous idea, either of their priesthood or of their nation; and which were in many instances contrary to the favourite prejudices and expectations of the people, as well as to what might be supposed to be the particular interests of the priests? It might rather have been concluded, that if they durst have presumed to lay their sacrilegious hands upon those sacred writings, they would have corrupted and interpolated them in favour of their own interests and prejudices, and struck out those passages that had a contrary aspect; which yet we find they have not done.

Our author, in order to throw a slur upon the prophets, had con-

founded the true prophets of the Lord with the false ones, In opposition to which, I observed the remarkable difference the Scripture puts between one and the other; and that no argument can be brought from the false prophets to the prejudice of the true. But he still persists in it, that the one of these were as truly prophets of God as the other. He urges, that 'the prophets were a regular fixed society, instituted by Samuel, who were to subsist and hold together by their own laws and constitution, as the priesthood had been instituted by Moses; and while they continued in the same society and order, without being opposed or expelled by their own laws and original constitutions, they were true prophets or prophets of the Lord, as well as the priests were priests of the Lord, though yet either the one or the other might be very bad men,' pp. 164, 165. And he talks to the same purpose again, p. 205. But the parallel he mentions will not hold; for as to the priesthood, all that was necessary by the Mosaical law to denominate a man a priest, was that he should be of the order and family of Aaron. Those that were of that family were priests of course, and no others were admitted to be so. But there is no law or constitution, that all that were in what he calls the prophetical colleges should be of course regarded as the prophets of the Lord, and that no others were to be accounted as such. I wish he had been pleased to tell us where we are to find the laws and constitutions of the prophetical society that he talks of. The utmost that can be gathered from the accounts given us in Scripture concerning those prophetical schools or colleges, is no more than this, that there were sacred societies gathered together under the direction of one or more prophets eminently so called, where persons were employed in sacred exercises; and that to these probably the people had recourse for instruction. And I observed, that the name of prophets might be sometimes ascribed in a larger sense to those that abode in those sacred societies, though they did not pretend to extraordinary inspiration; as the word prophecy is also sometimes taken in a large sense, where no inspiration is intended. But if we speak of prophets in the strict and proper sense, as persons professing to be extraordinarily inspired of God, it doth not appear that there was any society or college, in which all that belonged to it, or were governed by the rules of it, were of course to be regarded as true prophets of the Lord, as much and as properly as all of Aaron's family were to be regarded as priests. This is the author's own imagination, and of which he is not able to produce the least proof. For though it might well be, that some of those that were prepared and educated in those sacred seminaries, might become prophets in the strict sense, yet neither all that were thus educated were prophets, nor was it judged necessary to be in those seminaries in order to persons being accounted true prophets of the Lord; of which several instances might be given, and our author himself owns it. No man was esteemed a prophet in the proper sense, except he was looked upon to be extraordinarily inspired of God. And if he was regarded as thus inspired, he was looked upon as a prophet, whether he belonged to these colleges or

not. He that really was inspired and sent of God, was a true prophet of the Lord, and he that only falsely pretended to inspiration was a false prophet. It will be easily acknowledged, that there were many such false pretenders to prophecy among the Jews. And if this writer can prove that any of the prophets whose writings we admit as of divine authority were such, he will say something to the purpose; otherwise it is no prejudice at all to the authority of the true prophets of the Lord, that there were false pretenders to inspiration. Concerning these, it is often expressly declared, that God did not send them nor speak by them; that he gave them no command, and that they 'prophesied a false vision, and the deceit of their own heart.' Such were Ahab's 400 prophets, who were called Ahab's prophets, not merely because they were his subjects, as he is pleased to represent it; but because they were the court prophets, prophets not of God's sending, but of Ahab's choosing; and who made it their business to attend and flatter the court, and prophesy whatever they thought would please the king. This writer indeed seems surprised that I have the front to say, that 'the 400 prophets who prophesied falsely were not prophets of the Lord, and that if I credit the historian, I must see that they were prophets of the Lord, and that the Lord himself in this case did deceive them, by sending out a lying spirit among them, with a commission to give them a false vision for the destruction of Ahab.' pp. 204, 205. But all that can be gathered from the account the historian gives of them, is that that they pretended to be true prophets of the Lord, but were not so. And as to the parabolical vision of the prophet Micaiah, who is plainly distinguished from those pretended prophets, and opposed to them, though every expression and circumstance in representations of this kind is not to be strained to the utmost vigour; yet the general design is plain, which is to signify, that they were false prophets acted by a lying spirit, and that God suffered Ahab to be given up to their delusions, as a just punishment on him for his crimes.* After all, it is not such prophets as these that our moral philosopher bends his invectives against, and reproaches with so much bitterness. It is not the prophets that caressed and flattered the king and people, that prophesied smooth

* As to what this writer talks of its being an established maxim among them, that if a 'prophet was deceived the Lord deceived that prophet,' I suppose he refers to that passage, Ezek. xiv. 9, which evidently relates to the false prophets, that 'prophesied lies in the name of God,' concerning whom he had been speaking throughout the whole preceding chapter. And it is manifest that the intention of these expressions was not to signify, that God himself inspired those prophets with the lying messages they delivered in his name. For this he expressly disclaims. He declares that he did not send them, and had not spoken to them, and that they 'prophesied out of their own heart, and followed their own spirit, chap. xiii. 2, 3, 6, 7, see also Jer. xiv. 13, 14. The only sense therefore that these words are capable of, is that he gave up these false prophets to their own delusions, or permitted evil spirits to seduce them, as a just punishment for their wickedness and for the wickedness of the people who refused to hearken to the admonitions of the true prophets and followed the false ones, only because they flattered and countenanced them in their vices. So the apostle Paul, speaking of those that 'received not the love of the truth that they might be saved,' saith, that God would send them 'strong delusions that they should believe a lie.' 2 Thess. ii. 10, 11, see concerning this, 'Answer to Christianity,' &c. vol. ii. pp. 369—372.

things, and talked of nothing but peace and prosperity to them whilst they were going on in their wicked courses. These are not the prophets whom he represents as public incendiaries, the plagues and enemies of their country ; but it is the true prophets of the Lord against whom he manifests such an envenomed spite and malice ; those who with a noble impartial zeal and freedom, reprov'd the idolatries and other faults and vices of the kings, priests, false prophets and people, and delivered the messages they received from God, without regard to their own interest.

As to what he insinuates, that the people had no way of distinguishing between the true prophets and the false ones, I showed, that there were remarkable characters whereby they might be easily distinguished. And though the princes and people did not pay that just regard to the true prophets of the Lord that they ought to have done ; it was not that they were not convinced in their consciences that they were true prophets sent from God, but it was because they were strongly addicted to their vices, and could not bear their impartial reproofs, and liked those best that soothed and flattered them. With regard to the case the author puts concerning Haniah and Jeremiah, who 'prophesied vehemently one against the other, and declared in the name of the Lord quite contrary things,' p. 166, the king and people need not to have been so much at a loss as he represents it. For when Jeremiah denounced against Hananiah, that that very year he should die, because he had taught rebellion against the Lord ; which was accordingly accomplished, for he died that year in the seventh month ; this and other things might have convinced them that Jeremiah was a true prophet of the Lord, and should have engaged them to attend to his pathetical warnings, and the solemn messages he delivered to them in the name of God.

This writer had expressly charged the prophets as being the authors of all the insurrections and commotions in the kingdom of Israel for three hundred years. He enters upon a vindication of what he had offered on this subject, with observing, pp. 166, 167, that the quarrel between him and me is, because he cannot 'believe the infallibility of the Hebrew historians.' Whereas this is not the present question between us at all. But what I blame him for is, because he pretends, from those very historians, to charge the prophets with all the confusions and distractions of the state, directly contrary to plain truth and fact. Whether he supposes those historians fallible or not, he ought not to represent them as saying things which they never said, and after feigning history and facts out of his own brain, to put it upon the reader that he has the Hebrew historians for his vouchers.

He attempts, p. 168, &c. to vindicate what he had said concerning Saul's being obliged by Samuel to lead a private life twenty years at least after his first inauguration at Mizpeh. He assures his reader, that he had 'confirmed this by circumstances of the history which I could not answer.' And if the reader will take his word for this, it is well ; but if he will judge for himself, and

compare what our author had said in his former book, p. 294, with the answer I returned, 'Divine Authority,' p. 157, he will find that this is as true as this writer's confident assertions generally are. It was not a wise thing in him to put the reader in mind of this matter at all, except he could have offered something more to the purpose than now he has been able to do. But that he may seem to say something, he represents me as laying a great stress upon the chronology of Josephus, and then sets himself to prove, that his chronology is not much to be depended on; whereas it was he that had laid a stress upon Josephus' testimony, and I had no farther occasion to mention it, than to show that if he governed himself by Josephus' authority, it was against him. As to what he now adds, that we hear nothing of Samuel's great age when Saul was first anointed king; whereas when he was confirmed in his kingdom at Gilgal, he represents himself as grown very old; it is certain that before Saul was anointed king at all, Samuel is represented as old, and therefore taking his sons to assist him in administering justice to the people, 1 Sam. viii. 1, 5; and how long he lived afterwards, or how old he was when he died, we cannot tell. Eli, who was judge before him, lived till he was near a hundred years old.

He enters next upon a digression concerning the revenues of the high-priest, and the great court he kept, which he assures us 'was more splendid and numerous than any prince in the world had; and that therefore it was impossible that any other public, splendid, or numerous court should be kept by any revenues from the people, without seizing upon and detaining a considerable part of the legal rights and dues of the priesthood; and that Saul accordingly took a great part of those revenues to support his own court, &c. pp. 171, 172. This all proceeds upon the supposition of the truth of what he had advanced before; that the legal priesthood had above twenty shillings in the pound upon all the lands of Israel. But as this is his own fiction, what he here builds upon it falls to the ground. It appears, from what has been before observed, that as the Israelites by their original constitution, had each of them lands of inheritance, which they occupied, and had no proper landlords to whom they were to pay rent; even supposing them to have paid an annual rent to the priests, as much as those in other nations pay their landlords, which is the author's supposition, they might still have it in their power to pay taxes to their kings, as well as people in other countries both pay rents to their landlords, and many taxes to the state, besides dues to the priests. But this was not the case; the revenues of the priests under the law fell vastly short of this writer's computation, as I have shown. And the people might pay taxes sufficient to support the expense and grandeur of the king's court, and pay all the legal dues to the priests too, without being impoverished more than other nations. And as kings were their own choice, if it brought an additional burden upon them more than was laid upon them by their original constitution, they had nobody to blame but themselves; and it must be supposed they

were willing to support it, since they were warned of the expense when they first entered on that form of government.

As to what he says, pp. 173, 174, &c. concerning 'Solomon's dispensing with the people's paying sacrifices and other church dues, because they were not able to support the expense, and pay the taxes to the crown;' and that this raised the priests against him with whom the prophets conspired; and that after his death the ten tribes revolted from Rehoboam, because he would not promise or secure to them an 'exemption from the burden of the legal priesthood;' it is all pure fiction and romance, without any thing from the history to support it. Yea, it is directly contrary to the history, which informs us that what the people complained of, was the load of taxes and impositions Solomon had laid upon them, which they wanted to be taken off or mitigated. Whereas, according to this faithful relater, it was not the taxes Solomon had laid upon them that was the cause of their complaint. On the contrary Solomon had eased them of the burden they groaned under, which was that of the church dues and legal priesthood; and all that they desired of Rehoboam was, only to be continued in the same exemption from this burden in which Solomon had indulged them. And is not this a very fit man to be trusted in his representation of facts, that can thus at pleasure deny the account given in the history, and forge a quite contrary one, and that with as much confidence as if it were certainly true, and he could produce authentic memoirs for it?

He had said, *Mor. Phil.* vol. 1, p. 295, that 'it is plain from the history, that Samuel had taken upon him the priesthood, and had usurped it from the family of Eli.' In answer to which, it was observed, that this is his own imagination, and that there is not one word in the whole history to support it. Nor can I conceive how Samuel could make such a solemn appeal as he did to the whole nation, that he had wronged and defrauded no man, if he had wronged the family of Eli of the high priesthood, and usurped it for many years, when it did not belong to him. But our author is resolved still to persist in his charge, and after some observations upon 'false glasses and spectacles,' refers me to several texts, which he desires me to consult, viz. 1 Sam. vii. 9, ix. 12, x. 8, xi. 14, 15. I have consulted them, and find not one word about Samuel's high-priesthood, except his offering sacrifices be allowed as a proof of it, which any of the other priests could have done as well as the high-priest. Nor can it be proved, that he himself personally officiated in offering those sacrifices,* but only that they were offered in his presence, and by his order. So we find it is afterwards said of Saul, that he offered sacrifices, and of David, and of Solomon, and other kings that they offered sacrifices though they did not do it in person, but did it by the hand of the priests who attended them; and for any thing this writer can prove, it might be so with Samuel too: for it doth not so much as appear, that he was a priest, or of

* 1 Sam. xiii. 9, 10. 2 Sam. vi. 17. xv. 12. xxiv. 25. 1 Kings iii. 15. viii. 62, 63, 64.

the family of Aaron; rather it may be gathered from 1 Chron. vi. 33, 34, that he was of one of the families of the common Levites. And the great eminency he bore in presiding in the public solemnities, which this author urges, was wholly owing to his being an eminent prophet, and to his having exercised the office of judge of Israel, which was a distinct thing from the high-priesthood; nor had there been any one of the whole number of judges that was an high-priest, except Eli.

He passes over all he had farther said to defame Samuel, with only observing, that it was what might naturally be concluded from the history, though I showed that the very contrary appears from it; and then proceeds to his favourite subject, a declamation against David, whom he had before represented under the most odious character possible; and now, instead of retracting any part of the infamous reproach he had thrown upon that great prince, abuses him in a more outrageous manner than before.

I had shown in my former book, that David's conduct towards Saul was incomparably noble, loyal, and virtuous, and such as tendeth to form in every impartial mind a high idea of his eminent virtues, and of the generous and excellent disposition of his soul. This author, without troubling himself to answer what was alleged to prove this, continues to charge him with rebellion and treason, as he had done before. He first accuses him for having got some persons about him for his defence, though, as Grotius observes, he never did this till he found by many certain proofs, and by the advice of Saul's own son Jonathan, that that prince was absolutely determined to destroy him; and, which is highly to his honour, when he had got that band of men with him, never committed the least act of violence against his king, or country. And then he blames him for flying to the Philistines, when he should rather have found fault with Saul for having by his continual persecutions forced him to abandon his country. And there could not be a greater proof of the extreme distress he was reduced to, by the cruel rage and jealousy of Saul, than that he was obliged to commit himself to the mercy of open enemies, to whom he had done great mischief, and among whom he run the utmost hazard of his life. If in that dangerous situation he did things through fear that were unjustifiable, a candid mind would have pitied the distress he was reduced to, and have made allowances for the frailty of human nature in such circumstances. But every fault of David, with this writer, is a proof of the most determined villany and hypocrisy. His dissimulation with Achish, king of the Philistines, is exaggerated to the highest degree. He represents him as having destroyed all the south coasts of Philistia, when at the same time he pretended to king Achish, that he had made an inroad on the south of Judah. But this is not fairly represented. The nations David invaded were the Geshurites, and Gezerites (who were both of them, as Grotius shows, reliques of the ancient Canaanites) and the Amalekites; and these nations really lay to the south of Judah: so that when David said he had made an inroad 'against the south of Judah, and

against the south of the Jerahmeelites, and against the south of the Kenites,' he said nothing but what was true; for he had invaded the nations that lay to the south of these; though no doubt Achish understood him, that he had invaded the land of Judea itself, and David was willing that he should understand it so. See 1 Sam. xxvii. 8, 9, 10. If David had been a Roman hero, and his actions had fallen into the hands of their eloquent historians, I doubt not high encomiums would have been bestowed on his eminent patriotism and love to his country, even when he was banished from it; that no resentment for the unjust and barbarous treatment he had met with, nor even the necessity he seemed to be then under to please those among whom he resided, and whose protection he sought, could prevail with him to turn his arms against his country.

He goes on to assure us, that the 'Philistines now thought themselves pretty sure of David,' and represents him as having 'prevailed with them to raise a mighty army against Israel;' as if their raising an army was owing to his solicitations and interest; (of which there is not the least hint in the whole account, but the author's malice against David, must in this and other instances pass for proof) and yet in the same breath he declares, that the Philistines would not trust him, and blamed Achish for his good opinion of this artful fugitive, p. 178. And then, after informing us of an interview between David and Jonathan, a few days before the last battle; though the last interview between them that the history informs us of was at least two years before; see 1 Sam. xxiii. 17, 18. And after most absurdly insinuating that David sent Jonathan into the army to be killed in battle, as if that brave person Jonathan was of so mean a spirit, that he would not have gone to the army to assist his father and his country, if David had not put him upon it; he very pertinently observes, that 'this conduct towards Jonathan' (though nothing appears but what was noble and generous on both sides) 'gives me a true idea of the sanctity and fidelity of this divine hypocrite.' And I may much more justly say, that this way of representing things, gives one a true idea of the candour and integrity of this writer.

He next comes to what he calls 'another instance of his deep and most detestable hypocrisy,' p. 179, and that is, his ordering the messenger to be slain, who brought him the news of the death of Saul and Jonathan; and who, according to our author 'might have expected a vast reward.' And I am persuaded, if David had either rewarded him, or not punished him, he would have turned this also to David's prejudice, and made it the matter of a bitter accusation against him. This fellow had expressly avowed, that he himself had killed Saul. He that declared this was an Amalekite, i. e. of a nation that were great enemies to Saul. And might it not naturally be supposed, that an Amalekite might, in the distress Saul was in, take the opportunity to kill him, both in revenge for the slaughter of his countrymen, and in hopes to get a reward from David, whom he knew Saul had used very ill? His pretend-

ing that this was at Saul's own request, was to pass for nothing, and could not be admitted as any plea. It might have been imagined, that Saul might have lived, though sore wounded, and have escaped out of the battle; since according to the relation the Amalekite himself gave, Saul declared, 'that his life was yet whole within him;' see 2 Sam. i. 9. His own armour-bearer refused to kill him, 1 Sam. xxxi. 4. And yet this Amalekite pretended he did it. It is true this pretence was false; for it appears from 1 Sam. xxx. 4, 5, that Saul killed himself, when his armour-bearer refused to do it: but this Amalekite by charging himself with it, and bringing the 'crown that was on Saul's head, and the bracelets that were on his arms to David,' ver. 10, justly brought his own punishment and death upon himself: and if David had not ordered him to be slain, this writer would, I doubt not, have pretended that David had hired this Amalekite to kill Saul treacherously, whilst he was engaged in the battle, and wounded, and hard pressed by the enemy.

Our author next takes notice of David's pathetic lamentation over Saul and Jonathan. And after repeating it, he exclaims, 'O heavens! is human nature capable of such depths of deceit?' It seems this writer is such a stranger to all generosity of mind, that he had no notion of doing justice to an enemy. Far from this, he can allow himself to vilify and abuse the brightest characters. But David was of a nobler soul; and though Saul had acted a very unjust part towards him, yet he could do him the justice to acknowledge, that he had been a brave and valiant prince, of great courage and military skill, and who had been successful against the enemies of his country. This was what he celebrated in his pathological lamentation.

So desirous is this writer of finding fault with David, that he turns even his virtues to his prejudice. His refusing to kill Saul, who, with an unwearied malice and industry was pursuing after him to take his life, when providence had so ordered it, that he had it twice in his power to have slain him, and was urged to it by those about him; even this is turned to his disadvantage. Saul himself, prejudiced as he was against David, and jealous of him to the highest degree, yet was touched with it, and regarded it as a manifest proof of his noble and generous soul, and of the uprightness of his intentions. But it seems Saul did not know the circumstances of the case, and was not wise enough to discern what this writer, at the distance of 3000 years, is perfectly well acquainted with, that if David did not take that opportunity to kill him, it was merely because he durst not do it; and because it would have hindered the design he had of coming to the crown. At this rate it is easy to vilify the most generous actions in the world: it is only to attribute them, without proof, to some base and sinister view; and then the most glorious and heroic actions must pass for crimes, or at least lose all their praise. But the world is generally so just in these cases, as to turn it to the disadvantage of the impotent censurer, who proves nothing by it, but the malignity of his own

mind. The manner in which he concludes his reflections upon this part of David's conduct, is remarkable. He assures us, p. 222, that 'David only waited for an opportunity to cut Saul's throat;' when the story itself is the strongest proof to the contrary; and then utters this benevolent and decent wish, 'Away with him to the devil, from whence he came.' If this writer had been hired to expose himself, he could not have done it more effectually.

He next blames David as if the war he maintained against Ishbosheth after Saul's death, was a breach of the oath he had made to Saul, 1 Sam. xxiv. 20, 21. Whereas in that very oath, Saul supposed, that David was surely to be king, and that the kingdom of Israel was to be established in his hand. And therefore David's securing himself in it, after Saul's death, was no breach of that oath. And besides, it appears, that that war was carried on by the interest and ambition of Abner, against the consent and desire of the body of the people, who were for David's being their king. Vast numbers from all the tribes came to join him, immediately after Saul's death, and continued still to do so till the death of Ishbosheth which David was so far from encouraging, that he slew the authors of it. David's giving up Saul's sons to the Gibeonites to be put to death, is also produced as a manifest proof of his cruelty and treachery, and as a breach of his oath to Saul. He will have it, that this was only done by consent between David and the Gibeonites; and that the pretence of the oracle, and the name of God, was all artifice and falsehood. But if David's giving up Saul's sons to the Gibeonites, was by the direction of God himself, in a way of just retaliation for the great cruelty and inhumanity Saul had exercised towards that poor people, many of whom he had slain, and whom he probably intended to have extirpated; and that in violation of the most solemn covenant, in which the faith of the nation had been engaged; I can see no fault at all to be charged upon David, except obedience to God be so. And this is the representation made of it in the sacred history. Nor is there any thing in this proceeding, unworthy of the wisdom and goodness of God, as the wise and righteous governor of the world, who took this way to exhibit an illustrious declaration and monument to all ages of his displeasure, against such a signal act of perjury and cruelty, and a breach of a national covenant. Nor is there the least likelihood that David would have done this of himself. Those children of Saul were in a private station, not capable of giving him any umbrage. This happened probably many years after his coming to the crown, and when he was entirely established; besides Mephibosheth was spared, who was the son of Jonathan, Saul's eldest and best beloved son; and who upon that account must be supposed to have had greater interest with the people, and to have it more in his power to distress David, than any other of Saul's descendants; so that it is plain David did not act in this matter, from the base views which this writer imputes to him.

But his conduct towards Mephibosheth next falls under our author's censure. It cannot be denied, that David had shown him

great kindness; he had given him all that pertained to Saul, and to all his house, 2 Sam. ix. 9. And had treated him for many years with particular marks of distinction, as might be expected towards the son of one for whom he had so great an affection and esteem. But it is here urged against him, as the highest instance of ingratitude and cruelty, that he hearkened to the calumnies of Ziba, who had charged Mephibosheth's whole estate; and afterwards when he was informed by Mephibosheth of Ziba's perfidy, still ordered the land to be divided between them, so that Ziba was to have one half of it. As to David's hearkening to Ziba at first, the story was so artfully contrived, that it was sufficient to gain credit in the circumstances David was then in. And the readiness Ziba showed to serve him in his distress, and the ample and seasonable relief he brought him when he was in great want, and at a time when so many of those, that had pretended to be his best friends had forsaken him, certainly deserved a very signal acknowledgment and reward from David. And perhaps, he was so prejudiced in his favour, by the readiness he showed to serve him both then and afterwards, 2 Sam. xix. 17, that he might still think there was some truth in the story he told him; and therefore ordered him half the estate, though he would not give him the whole, as he at first designed. But the account the learned Selden gives of this matter entirely takes away the very foundation of our author's calumnies. When David said to Mephibosheth, 1 Sam. xix. 29, why speakest thou any more of thy matters? I have said, thou and Ziba divide the land; the meaning of it is not, as if David had determined, that Ziba was to have one half of the estate in full property as lord of it, and Mephibosheth the other; but he refers to the appointment he had made before, 1 Sam. ix. 10, 11, according to which Mephibosheth was to be the proper lord and proprietor of the land, but Ziba was to manage it for him; and as he was to bring in the fruits or product of the land to Mephibosheth, so he himself and his fifteen sons and twenty servants were to live upon it, and to be maintained out of it. So that it is as if he had said, 'thou needest say no more to me about thy affairs, or make any more apologies;' what I have formerly pronounced and determined shall stand good; I have said it, and I will abide by it, thou shalt have the land in property: and I have appointed Ziba and his family to take care of it for thee, and to be maintained out of it, and have share of the profits. And then the sense of Mephibosheth's answer, nay, let him take all, seeing my Lord, the king, is come home in peace, is this; let him have the whole land in property; I am content, since the king, that has been so kind to me, and to whom I am so much obliged, is returned in safety and prosperity. See Selden de Success. in bona defunct. cap. 25. ad finem.

As to what our author adds, p. 185, that David barely spared Mephibosheth's life, after he had stript him of all, and put him out of a condition ever to marry, or settle any dowry: this is false, even upon his own representation of the case; since Mephibosheth by his

own acknowledgment had one half of the estate allowed him, which probably was very considerable. And it is certain, that Mephibosheth did marry; and a particular account is given of his descendants, a numerous progeny, in which the line and family of Saul was preserved, compare 2 Sam. ix. 12, with 1 Chron. viii. 34—40, where the line of Saul's house is carried down many generations. So that David kept his oath to Saul, who had obliged him to swear, that he would not cut off his, Saul's name out of his father's house, 1 Sam. xxiv. 21, 22.

If this writer had any regard to decency or his own reputation, he would have taken care not to put the reader in mind of what he had said, concerning David's dancing naked before the ark; yet he now repeats it with greater confidence than before, pp. 185, 186. This whole matter was so particularly considered in my former book, that it is needless to insist any more upon it. I shall therefore refer the reader thither, and then leave him to reflect on the spirit and conduct of this writer, who can, without blushing or remorse, repeat this aspersion, after the incredible absurdity and baseness of it had been so fully exposed.

He next finds fault with David for his war against the Edomites. And here he throws his censure in the dark, since for aught he knows that war might be both just and necessary, and upon the highest provocation. And I make no doubt that it really was so. For David, who would so gladly have maintained a good harmony and friendship with the Ammonites, the ancient enemies of his country, would not have been less desirous to be at peace with the Edomites, if it had been in his power. And that the Edomites were among those enemies that had combined together to invade Israel, and had conspired its ruin, may be plainly gathered from what is said in the lxth. psalm; where the imminent danger Israel was in of being utterly destroyed is represented in a very expressive manner; and a noble and pathetic address to God for victory over their enemies, particularly the Edomites, with a humble confidence in his protection and defence, from a sense of the justice and goodness of their cause. Our author goes on to tell us, that David sawed the Edomites asunder; for which we have nothing but his own authority; for there is not one word of this in the account that is given us of this matter in the history. He adds, that he left none alive but what could save themselves by flight. But this is not true. Since it is represented as the effect of this war, that David put garrisons in Edom, and all they of Edom became his servants. Which shows, that he did not destroy them all, but spared those that were willing to submit. And that therefore when it is said, that Joab staid six months in Edom, and slew every male; it is only to be understood of his killing those in arms, and that refused to submit. But because it is said that Joab went up to bury the dead, which is probably to be understood of those of their own army, that had been killed in fighting with the Edomites; and is afterwards added, that he staid six months in Edom, therefore this sagacious writer wisely concludes

from it, p. 187, that such was the slaughter in Idumea, that Joab was six months in burying the dead. Compare 2 Sam. viii. 14, with 1 Kings ix. 15, 16.

He concludes his account of David with charging him with the venereal disease, which he pretends is described in the xxxviii. psalm, and very civilly invites me to publish a volume of sermons upon it. But he hopes I will not allegorize it all, and says that this was the state not of David's body, but of his soul, p. 188. And if I should say this, I am in no fear that this author would be able to confute me. Any one that is acquainted with David's stile, cannot but know that he often signifies the anguish and sorrow of his mind, by expressions that literally relate to some pain or distemper of body. As in the lth Psalm, 8th verse, 'Make me to hear joy and gladness, that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice.' And Ps. xxxii. 2, 3, 4, 'When I kept silence, my bones waxed old, through my roaring all the day long. For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer.' Which expressions are designed to signify the grief and anguish of his mind, under a sense of the divine displeasure, from which he was freed upon his penitent acknowledgment of his sins, and humble and earnest applications to God for mercy, see ver. 56. Our author observes on this occasion, that any one that reads and considers the account Moses has given of the plague of leprosy, must see that it was venereal.* If so, I am sure Moses could not show a greater disapprobation of it than he has done, since this was regarded in his law as the highest kind of uncleanness; on the account of which persons were to be kept separate, as unfit for human society, till they were cleansed from it. And it may justly be concluded, that if David had the leprosy, we should have been told of it, since it must have occasioned his being separated from society and the affairs of government for a while, as well as debarred from the house of God, and the congregation of the people.

He concludes his invective against David, with accusing him of fearfulness and cowardice; and declaring that he has nothing of the manly bravery of a soldier. This charge is of a piece with the rest and is designed to finish David's character, in which he is resolved not to allow so much as one good quality; and then he gives us the reason why he has been the more particular on David's life and character; it is because he is the saint-errant of spiritual scho-

* He seemed to be of another opinion in his former book, where he reckons the leprosy with the itch, scab, and other cutaneous foulnesses; for which he tells us, the people of Israel were very remarkable and famous. And that nothing was more beneficial and effectual in this case than cold-bathing. And that this was one principal reason, why their great law-giver interwove this practice with the very genius and constitution of their religion. And then he adds, that if a fresh and clear skin, a good complexion, a freedom from cutaneous diseases, a system of well braced nerves, and all that strength, activity, and vigour which the body can communicate to the mind; if these things are of any value or consideration, cold-bathing deserves to be enjoined under the strongest religious sanctions. Mor. Phil. vol. i. pp. 109, 110. So that here we see our author himself has found out a good reason, for several of the ritual injunctions and purifications required in the law of Moses, which according to him must have been very wisely appointed.

lastics, and school-divinity cannot stand without him. But he hopes to show, that Christianity can be no loser by this. This writer, to be sure, is mightily concerned for the honour of Christianity, and has its interests nearly at heart! We are no way obliged to vindicate any of David's faults, which are not concealed or disguised in Scripture; but he had also many eminent and noble qualities, and has been always spoken of with great regard by the whole nation: our Saviour and his apostles still mention him with honour, not only as a great king, but as an illustrious prophet; who was honoured to be the penman of a very valuable part of the sacred writings; which I doubt not is the true cause of this writer's venom, and determined malice against him.

CHAPTER IX.

His vindication of what he had said against the prophets, and particularly concerning Elisha's management with Hazael considered. What he farther offers to show, that the prophets were the principal fomenters of the war between Israel and Judah, proved to be false and groundless. The difference between the Baalitic idolatry and that of Jeroboam shown. The heathen idolatry, not merely the worship of the one true God, by the mediation of inferior Deities. Our author's account of the ancient Persians considered. Their doctrine of two principles, not the same with that of the Jews and Christians. They were worshippers of the sun, and of fire. His account of Zoroaster's doctrine, concerning the future punishment of the wicked. His pretence that our Saviour's doctrine, concerning the resurrection and a future judgment, was a transcript from the second book of Esdras, considered. That a future state was believed among the ancient Jews, vindicated against this writer's exceptions.

OUR author begins his viith section, p. 190, &c. with repeating what he had said before, that the burden of the Mosaical priesthood was the cause of the revolt of the ten tribes from Rehoboam, which I have shown to be all pure fiction and romance. He next represents me as denying that Solomon, during his whole reign, was in alliance with Egypt, p. 192, when I had said no such thing. But whereas this writer had represented, that it was his foreign alliances, and particularly with Egypt, that secured him against the conspiracy, which he pretends was formed against him by the priests and prophets, at the latter end of his reign; see *Mor. Phil.* vol. i. p. 301. I showed that this is a mere imagination, and that at the latter end of his reign, Egypt, instead of giving assistance to Solomon, rather gave encouragement to his enemies. Instances of this were produced, which he is pleased to take no notice of.

He proceeds, p. 193, to a repetition of what he had said more largely in his former book, concerning the prophets being the causes

of the several revolutions in the kingdom of Israel, but entirely passes over what was fully and distinctly offered to the contrary. At the same time he exclaims against me for representing him as justifying Jezebel in destroying the prophets of the Lord; and declares, that he had not justified or approved of it. But if any man can read what he said in his former book, pp. 312, 314, and think he has not justified or approved of Ahab and Jezebel's conduct, in endeavouring to destroy the prophets of the Lord, I shall wonder at it. He again gives us his word, that the very constitution and profession of the prophets was founded on the principles of persecution; and that the Mosaic law was a scheme of persecution, superstition, and false religion. And then thinks fit to represent me, as judging of men's commission and authority from God by their own pretensions to it, and declarations concerning it, as if I was for taking men's own word, as a sufficient evidence of their divine mission, without any farther proof. And he assures his reader, that though I admit miracles as a proof in case of Moses, &c. I would not admit them, as proofs in case of Mahomet or Zoroaster. And when he can give us as good reason to believe that Mahomet* or Zoroaster, wrought signal miracles in proof of their divine mission, as we have to believe those of Moses or Jesus Christ, it will be time enough to consider them. All these are poor insinuations that prove nothing, and are brought in to make up for a great deficiency in reason and argument.

I had urged that the illustrious miracles wrought by Elijah and Elisha, sufficiently proved the divine authority and commission of those prophets. To which he replies, that first I cannot prove the certain truth of the facts, but must take them entirely upon trust from the historians. And then, that if true, they would not prove any commission they had to anoint Jehu, &c. To the first I answer, that we have the same proof that the prophets wrought those miracles, that we have that they had any hand in anointing Jehu. And in judging of the legality of the fact, as it is represented in the history, we must take the whole fact in all its circumstances, as there represented. And I am still of opinion, that supposing those facts true, the divine commission of those prophets is very evident. Nor can I believe, that God would have enabled them to confirm their mission by so many illustrious miracles, far transcending all human power, and some of them, e. g. raising the dead, probably that of all created beings; if all the while they had only cloaked the designs of their own ambition, by a false pretence to inspiration from God, and were for sanctifying treason and murder with an hypocritical appearance of zeal for his holy name. And yet all along

* Mahomet, though often called upon by the Arabians to prove his divine mission by miracles, as Moses and Jesus Christ had done, never durst attempt to work any before them. Ignorant as they were, he had no hope of being able to impose upon them in such things, of which all their senses must have been witesses. And, therefore, endeavoured to persuade them that there was no need of miracles to prove his mission, *See Prid. life of Mahomet*, pp. 27, 28, &c.

to the very last, he gave them the most illustrious testimonies of his acceptance and approbation.

P. 197, he comes to vindicate the story of the prophet Elisha's pretended management with Hazael, which he had strangely misrepresented. He still insists upon it, that the present Hazael gave the prophet in the name of Benhadad, was designed to bribe the prophet in his own favour; though it appears plainly from the text that it was by Benhadad's order, that Hazael went to the prophet, and made him that present. But he most absurdly argues from the greatness of the present, as if that was a proof that the king did not send it, but the captain gave it of himself. Whereas it is very accountable, that the king might order this magnificent present on his own account, when he sent to inquire of the prophet about the recovery of his health; especially, as he might probably entertain some hopes, that he might be able to heal him, and that his prayers might prevail for his recovery. But no reasonable account can be given of this present on the author's scheme, who supposes that because it was so large, the captain intended it as a bribe. Indeed, if the prophet could by his interest among the Syrians have intrigued with the great men and people there, as he supposes him to have done in Israel, and so have helped to raise Hazael to the throne by his influence, there would have been some sense in his endeavouring by large presents to bribe him to his party, and engage him to embrace his interests. But to suppose that Hazael should take such pains, and be at such expense to gain a stranger to help him to the crown in a foreign country, where he had no acquaintance nor interest, is an imagination that would scarce have entered into any man's head but this author's.

I had urged the great absurdity of supposing that Elisha would contribute to fix Hazael upon the throne of Syria, when the prospect of it gave him the greatest trouble and sorrow; and he certainly knew that Hazael would prove a greater plague to Israel than all the other kings of Syria before him. And I had taken notice of the unfairness of this writer, who, in order to elude this, had changed the prophet's words; and whereas he said to Hazael, I know the evil which thou shalt do unto the children of Israel, &c. had represented it as if he only had said, I fear, &c. as if it was a thing of which the prophet was uncertain. Now what does our author say to this? instead of vindicating himself against this charge of misrepresentation, he goes on in it; and still insists upon it, that he only feared it, though the prophet expressly declares that he knew it, and speaks of it as of a thing absolutely certain.

But he urges, that he should have advised Hazael against murdering his king, if he had any notion of it; as if he could have hoped that his advice could have any influence on a man governed wholly by ambitious views, and who he well knew would stick at no villany to gain a crown; and when he had obtained it, would go on in a course of the greatest oppressions and cruelties. Nothing can be more evident, than it is from the whole story, as recorded 1 Kings viii. that the prophet would have been very far from doing any thing

to promote Hazael's advancement to the throne of Syria, had it been in his power; and that though he foreknew and foretold it, as a thing that would certainly come to pass, yet it was a thing highly disagreeable to him, and which he would gladly have prevented if he could have done it. And it may as justly be said, that our Saviour was the author of Judas's treason, because he foretold it, as that the prophet was the cause of Hazael's invading the throne of Syria, because he foretold that he would be king.

He proceeds, p. 200, to take notice of the prosperity of Jeroboam's reign, and says, he had given the true reason of it, and that I had coined a reason; because I had attributed it to the divine mercy and indulgence towards Israel, to try if his goodness would lead them to repentance; to which it is expressly ascribed, 2 Kings xiii. 23; xiv. 25, 26, 27. He had alleged, that 'Jeroboam was as great an idolater, or supporter and encourager of idolatry, as any that had been before him.' And from thence most absurdly inferred, that the prosperity of his reign showed, that idolatry had not been the cause of any of the evils or calamities that had happened to the kings or people in former reigns. And at that rate it might be proved, that God never punishes wicked princes or nations for their crimes, because he often suffers wicked princes to prosper, and bears with a guilty people, and treats them with mercy and indulgence for a time. But besides it was shown, that Jeroboam the Second fell into the sin of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, which consisted in worshipping the true God after a wrong manner, yet he and the other princes of the house of Jehu did not fall into the Baalitish idolatry, as the house of Ahab had done, which was an express and open revolting from the God of Israel. But for this I am corrected by this writer, who represents it as a very absurd thing in me to suppose, that there were two sorts of idolatry in Israel. Whereas according to him, there was only one kind of idolatry, which both Jeroboam and the house of Ahab were guilty of, the inferior worship of tutelar deities; only Jeroboam worshipped the tutelar deities of the Egyptians, and Ahab of the Sidonians. But it is evident, from the accounts given us of this matter in the sacred history, that the Baalitish idolatry is there represented, as of a worse kind than that of Jeroboam, and as carrying idolatry to a greater and more criminal height than the other. Hence it is said of Ahab, that 'as if it had been a light thing to him to walk in the way of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, that he served Baal, and worshipped him.' And on this account it is, that he 'did more to provoke the Lord God of Israel to anger, than all the kings of Israel that were before him,' 1 Kings xiv. 31, 33; see also 2 Kings iii. 2, 3. Accordingly, when Jehu contrived to abolish the worship of Baal, he said, 'Come see my zeal for the Lord,' 2 Kings x. 16. And the worshippers of Baal are there distinguished from the other Israelites, who are called 'the servants of the Lord,' as professing to worship the true God, ver. 23. And yet it is observed concerning Jehu, that though he destroyed Baal out of Israel, 'yet he took no heed to walk in the law of the Lord God of Israel

with all his heart ; for he departed not from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat,' ver. 31. Jeroboam the First did not pretend to fall from the worship of the Lord Jehovah, the God of Israel. He said in his heart, ' If this people go up to the house of the Lord at Jerusalem, then shall the heart of this people turn again to the house of David.' Whereupon he took counsel, and made two calves of gold, and said unto the people, ' It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem : behold thy gods, O Israel, or as it might be justly rendered, ' behold thy God, O Israel,' which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.* And he set the one in Bethel, and the other in Dan, 1 Kings xii. 26—30. From which passage it is evident, that Jeroboam did not intend, as this writer represents it, to worship the Egyptian tutelar gods, but to worship the God that brought up Israel out of the land of Egypt, which is the character under which the Lord Jehovah is frequently described, see Exod. xx. 2 ; Ps. lxxxi. 10 ; Hos. xiii. 4. And indeed it could not be supposed, that the Egyptian tutelar gods would bring the Israelites out of Egypt to the destruction of the Egyptians. He professed to worship the same God that was worshipped at Jerusalem, but only told the people that it was too much for them to go up to the temple there, and therefore erected temples of his own, to which they might go for divine worship ; and there placed golden calves, as symbolical representations of the Divine presence. This was a great sin, as being an express breach of the second commandment, which forbade the worship of God by images. And it tended to lead the people wrong, and gradually to debase and corrupt their notions of the Deity, and to prepare the way for other kinds of idolatry ; when once they had forsaken the worship which God himself had appointed. But afterwards Ahab went farther, and established the worship of other gods. It is probable several of the people might have fallen into the worship of Baal, &c. before, and were connived at by the former kings. But now the worship of Baal, as the proper deity, was established ; the altars that were erected to the Lord Jehovah were thrown down ; and those that worshipped him were persecuted, 1 Kings xix. 10. This was an express and open revolt from the true God, and therefore brought the house of Ahab under a peculiar guilt and vengeance.

But our author represents the matter, as if, in worshipping Baal, they still intended to worship the true God, but only were for worshipping him by the mediation of Baal, as an inferior deity. And he positively pronounces, that the worship they paid him was all subordinate mediatorial worship. But though there were inferior deities called Baalim (though some suppose these are only to be understood of the different images of Baal) yet it seems evident, from the whole account given us, that there was a chief god, who is still called Baal by way of eminency, and spoken of in the singular number ; and whom they regarded as the principal

* See concerning this what is said above, p. 374.

object of their worship. There is not the least hint, that they looked higher to any superior deity; but in Baal their views terminated, whilst the true God was neglected. By Baal, it is most probable they intended to worship the sun.* Him the ancient Phœnicians acknowledged to be *μόνον οὐρανοῦ κύριον*, the only lord of heaven.† And they honoured him with the name of Baal, which properly signifies lord. This writer indeed takes upon him to affirm, that ‘the idolatry of the heathens was all of the same kind; the worship of God by the mediation of subordinate, national, residential, and tutelar deities,’ p. 201. As if the heathens still had their views ultimately fixed upon the one living and true God; and only intended to worship the supreme Lord of the universe by the mediation of inferior deities. But whatever notions some of their philosophers and wise men might have of this matter, there is no proof that this was the worship established in their respective states by their legislators, or practised by the people. The Platonists indeed talked of genii or demons, whose office they supposed it to be to carry our prayers to the gods, and to bring from them oracles, and divine gifts to us. See Plutarch. De Isid. et Osirid, and Apuleius de Deo Socrat. But then it is to be observed, that these mediators or intercessors were supposed to intervene, not between men and the one supreme God, but between men and the celestial deities, of whom there were many whom they acknowledged and worshipped; nor did they invest those whom they called celestial deities, with this mediatory office. Plato himself, whatever notions he had of the first principle and cause of all things, yet in his books of laws, which were designed for the people, did not prescribe to them the worship of the one supreme God, because he looked upon him to be incomprehensible; and that what he is, and how he is to be worshipped, is not to be described or declared; nor were the vulgar capable of forming a just notion of him. But he appointed twelve solemn festivals to be observed to the twelve principal gods; and proposed the worship of the heavens and stars, whose divinity he recommended. See his eighth book of laws; and his *Epinomy* or appendix to his book of laws. Indeed, the vulgar among the heathens did in many places worship many gods in conjunction; and though they had a notion of one chief god above the rest, he whom they regarded as such was generally only an idol, of the same kind, though of greater eminence than the rest. Hence we find all the gods often joined together, and worshipped in conjunction with Jupiter at the head of them. They usually speak of god and the gods promiscuously, because they considered their deities collectively, as making up one system. They had a temple dedicated to all the gods both at Rome and Athens, and they were all honoured with one common festival called *ἑορτή*; and they had altars consecrated to all the gods and goddesses, with such

* See Calmet's Dissertation on the Phœnician Deities. And Vossius de Idol. lib. 2, cap. 4. 6.

† See the Fragments of Sanchoniathon in Euseb. de Prep. Evangel. lib. v.

inscriptions as these, ‘Dis deabusque omnibus,’ and ‘dibus deabusque omnibus,’ and the like. When they invoked any particular deity, it was usual for the priests, afterwards, to add an invocation of all the deities in general, as Servius notes upon that of Virgil,

“Dii deæque omnes studium quibus arva tueri.”

In many nations the sun was the deity whom they principally adored.* And Job represents this kind of worship, as a ‘denying the God which is above,’ Job xxxi. 28. Among some, universal nature was the one supreme deity, and the several parts of the universe were worshipped as parts of the divinity.† In Greece and

* Concerning this see Vossius at large, de Idolatria, lib. 2. cap. 3. ad cap. 18; Macrobius Saturnal. lib. 1., takes a great deal of pains to prove that the sun was the one universal deity, who was adored under several names. This plea he manages with a great deal of wit and learning in the person of Vettius Prætextatus. And he concludes all with a double citation; the one is of a short invocation, which he tells us the heathen theologians made use of ‘in Sacris,’ in their devotions or sacred ceremonies; the form whereof runs thus, ‘ἦλιε παντραπετορ κόσμου πνεῦμα, κόσμου δύναμις, κόσμον φῶς. O sun omnipotent, the spirit of the world, the power of the world, the light of the world.’ The other is taken out of the verses of Orpheus, in which the sun is called Jupiter, the Father of the sea and land; and the generation of all things is ascribed to him.

By some the heaven or circumambient ether was esteemed Jove or the chief god. Remarkable to this purpose is the verse Cicero cites from Ennius. ‘Aspicere hoc sublime candens quem invocant omnes Jovem.’ And he cites Euripides to the same purpose, speaking of the ether, ‘Hunc summum perhibeto divum, hunc perhibeto Jovem. Cic. de Nat. Deor. lib. 2. And in his fourth book of Academic Questions, he observes concerning several of the Stoics, that they supposed the ether to be the chief God, being endowed with a mind whereby all things are governed; and that Cleanthes, a principal Stoic, and scholar of Zeno, looked upon the sun to be lord of all, and as having the supreme dominion. From whence he infers, according to the manner of the academics, that by this disagreement among the wise we are constrained to be ignorant who is our Lord; for we know not whether to pay our service to the sun or ether. Plato in Cratylus supposes that the worship of the heaven and stars was the most ancient religion of the Pagans. It seems to me, says he, that the first inhabitants of Greece anciently, as well as many of the barbarians now, esteemed these only to be gods, the sun and moon, and earth, and stars, and heaven. Φαίνονται μοι, οἱ πρῶτοι τῶν ἀνθρώπων τῶν περὶ τὰν ἑλλάδα, τοὺς μόνους θεοὺς ἡγεῖσθαι, ὥσπερ νῦν πολλοὶ τῶν βαρβάρων, ἥλιον, καὶ σελήνην, καὶ γῆν, καὶ ἀστρα, καὶ οὐρανόν. And Aristotle to the same purpose observes, that it hath been delivered to us by those of very ancient times, both that the stars are gods, and that the Divinity containeth the whole of nature, Arist. Metaph. lib. 14, cap. 8. Maimonides saith concerning the Zabians, whose sect, he tells us, did overrun a great part of the earth, that they all held the eternity of the world; and that the heavens and stars according to them are the Deity. Mor. Nevoch. par. 3, cap. 29.

† Plutarch observes concerning the Egyptians, τὸν πρῶτον θεὸν τῷ παντὶ τὸν αὐτὸν νομίζουσι. That they account the first or chief god to be the same with the τὸ παν, the world or the universe. And he mentions this as a proof of their piety and just sentiments of the Divinity. See Plut. de Isid. et Osirid. In the theology generally received among the Stoics, the world or the one animated mundane system was God. They considered souls as parts of God, the soul of the world; and visible and corporeal things, as parts of his body. And upon this principle they vindicated and accounted for the Pagan idolatry, and worshipped the several parts of the universe, under the names of the popular deities. But whilst they thus pretended to worship one God under different names and manifestations, they really deified the several parts of the material world, and the several powers and virtues diffused through the whole; and, instead of curing the popular polytheism, only established it; and as Plutarch observes, they filled the air, heaven, earth, and sea with gods. Plut. de communi notit. adversus Stoicos. These sentiments of the Stoics, Cicero represents thus, ‘Quoniam hunc mundum esse sapientem, habere mentem, qua et se, et ipsum fabricata sit, & omnia moderetur, moveat, regat, erit persuasum etiam, solem, lunam, stellasque omnes,

Rome, where polytheism, or the worship of many gods, was established, Jupiter had a supremacy over the rest. But this Jupiter, who was regarded as the chief of the gods, the Thunderer, and the father of gods and men, was confounded with that Jupiter whom the poets sung, and of whom the mythologists told and the people believed such strange fables. So that it may be justly said, that the only true God was to them in a great measure an unknown God, whom they neglected and disregarded, whilst their worship was paid to idol deities. So vain were they become in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. It was to prevent this, that all manner of worship of inferior deities was strictly forbidden in the law of Moses, whereby it was gloriously distinguished from other laws and constitutions, and they were expressly commanded to worship the one true God, and him only. While among other nations, where the worship of many gods obtained, and was countenanced by their laws, men soon began to worship them more than the Creator; and lost the knowledge and worship of the one living and true God, amidst a multiplicity of idol deities.

This writer had in his former book asserted, that there was a most bloody war carried on between Israel and Judah, under the pretence of religion, for the space of about 260 years; that Judah was the aggressor in this war; and the prophets had the chief hand in carrying it on. But on the contrary it was shown, that the prophets had no hand in fomenting the war between Israel and Judah, but rather dissuaded and discouraged it; that it does not appear that Judah was the aggressor in this war; and that the war was so far from being continual and uninterrupted, as he is pleased to represent it, that we read of no wars between them for a hundred years together, and afterwards for fourscore years more.* Now what does this writer say to this? It is not his way to acknowledge, that he has been wrong, let it be proved ever so plainly upon him. But in order to throw dust in the eyes of his readers, and to put an appearance of saying something, he enters upon a long dull detail from p. 202 to p. 210, most of which is nothing at all to the point in question, and the few things that might be so are entirely misrepresented. Thus e. g. as to the war between Baasha and Asa, he not only supposes that Judah was the aggressor in this war, though it appears from the history, that Baasha king of Israel begun it, see 2 Chron. xvi. 1; but in a manifest contradiction to the account there given us, will have it, that the prophets put Asa upon making an alliance with Benhadad king of Syria. He expressly asserts, that the prophets of the Lord approved of this alliance, and justified it in Asa, and engaged a foreign idolatrous power to do their work for them, p. 203, whereas the very contrary to this is true. For the prophet

* *terram, mare, Deos esse, quod quadam animali, intelligentia per omnia permeat, et transeat.* Quest. Accad. lib. 4. Varro, the most learned of the Romans, had the same notion, as appears from August. de Civit. Dei. lib. 7, cap. 6.

* See Div. Author. pp. 192, 193.

Hanani came to Asa in the name of God, and reproved him for this alliance, which so enraged the king, that he put the prophet in prison, 2 Chron. xvi. 7—10. So signal a falsification of the history furnisheth a new proof to the reader, who has had several proofs of it before, that this writer, who is pleased to honour himself with the title of Philalethes, the lover of truth, will stick at nothing, how false soever, that he thinks will serve his cause, or tend to expose the prophets or priests. And then he goes on to insinuate, that it was because Asa had entered into this alliance with the idolatrous Syrians, that he is so highly extolled by the historians, and that Jehoshaphat is blamed by them for entering into an alliance with Ahab for the defence of his country. But it is certain that Jehoshaphat had a better character given him by the historians, than Asa himself; though he is blamed for entering into affinity with the house of Ahab, which produced many mischiefs to his posterity. Our author after this, and repeating what he had said before concerning Ahab's four hundred prophets, which has been already considered, hath nothing further to offer to fix the charge of all 'the commotions and revolutions in the state upon the prophets;' and yet very gravely tells his reader, that 'any man must see this, who will read the history with his own natural eyesight, and without systematical spectacles,' p. 206.

He had advanced it as a charge against all the prophets that lived before the Assyrian captivity, and afterwards against all the prophets in general, that they declaimed only against idolatry, and scarce ever meddled with the other vices and immoralities of the people. The falsehood of this charge was clearly shown.* He finds himself unable to justify it, and yet is unwilling to retract it. He observes, that Isaiah, Hosea, and Micah, whom I had particularly mentioned, as strongly inveighing against all manner of vice and immorality, were all living and prophesying at the last Assyrian captivity; but it is also certain, that they had been living and prophesying a considerable time before it. And most part of Isaiah's prophecies, and probably all those of Hosea and Micah were delivered before that captivity; and they are all of the same strain, everywhere reproving the people for their vices and sins, and calling them to repentance. As doth also the prophet Amos, who prophesied before the Assyrian captivity, in the reign of Jeroboam, when the Israelites were in great prosperity. Our author is pleased to take no notice of this, though I had mentioned it, but contents himself with calling upon his reader to 'see the justice and candour of this systematical writer;' and if he can persuade his reader, after considering what I offered, that there is any justice or candour in his representation of this matter, I will readily own that he is a very lucky writer.

He falls heavily upon me for representing it as an absurd thing, to suppose that the Jews should learn their religion and aversion to

* See 'Div. Author.' pp. 194—196.

idolatry from the Persians, the adorers of the sun and of fire. He is astonished that any man that pretends to learning should at this time of day believe this groundless story and abuse of the Persians, a calumny which has been cast upon them by the Greek historians, who knew nothing of the Persians or their religion ; and refers me to Dr. Hyde, as having fully confuted this, and proved, beyond all contradiction, that the Medes and Persians, from their very first records, had never been idolaters. But Dr. Hyde himself owns, as hath been already shown, that they had fallen into Sabaism before the days of Abraham, and after being reformed by him, relapsed into it again ; and Zoroaster brought in another reformation among them in the days of Darius Hystaspes. But, after all, the account Dr. Hyde gives of the religion of the ancient Persians is far from being so authentic and unexceptionable as this writer represents it. The authorities he produces are chiefly from modern Persian or Arabian writers, scarce any of them above five or six hundred years old, or from the declarations of the present priests among the Gaures or modern worshippers of fire, or from the liturgies and books now in use among them ; which carry in them many marks of mixtures taken from the Jews, Mahometans, and Christians. And these authorities can scarce be judged, in the opinion of any impartial unprejudiced person, to preponderate those of the ancient Greek and Roman writers, who gave an account of the religion of the Persians in the times in which they lived ; and who, considering the correspondence between the Greeks and Persians, before and after the conquest made by Alexander, and afterwards between the Romans and Parthians, could hardly be supposed so ignorant or so misinformed, concerning the Persians and their religion, as the learned doctor supposes. And, though there may be some variation among them, yet it is observable, that they are for the most part very uniform in the accounts they give of the religion of the ancient Persians. Mr. Chapman very justly observes, that by Dr. Hyde's own acknowledgment, we know nothing of the Persian religion while Media and Persia were in subjection to the Assyrian for above a thousand years together ; and that after the Medes had shook off the Assyrian yoke, the first lawgiver in religion among them after Zoroaster was Keyomaras ; and what system of religion his was, the doctor could inform us from no better an authority than Sharisthani, a modern Arabian. And all that Sharisthani himself knew of it was from modern Persians or Indians ; and how much their accounts are to be depended upon, we may conclude from their supposing Keyomaras to be the first man Adam, see Euseb. p. 430. And if what our author himself tells us be true, that the Cuthites or Samaritans, the people whom Assarhaddon had placed about Samaria, were Persians, transplanted thither out of the northern provinces of Persia,* see Lett. to Euseb.

* Dr. Hyde himself observes, ' de Relig. vet. Persar.' cap. i. p. 16, ' That Esarhaddon transplanted into Samaria the Medes, Shushanites, and Elamites or Persians ; and indeed these are expressly mentioned as transplanted thither, Ezra iv. 9 ; and by comparing

p. 52. Here is a proof that the ancient Persians were idolaters; since it is manifest, from the account given of them, that those colonies were so, 2 Kings xvii. 30, 31, 33. And it was by acquaintance with the Jewish law that they were turned from their idolatry, and at length had as great an aversion to it as the Jews themselves.

This writer very positively pronounces that every word that I had said about the Persian and Magian religion is false. And whereas I had observed, that the main principle of the Magian religion was the acknowledgment of two principles, the one good and the other evil,* both of which they acknowledged to be gods, and to both they paid their adorations: he answers, that their notion of the two principles was no other than the 'current doctrine among Jews and Christians concerning God and the devil. I will grant this, if he can prove that the Jews or Christians worshipped the devil, as the Persians did the evil god Arimanius.† A noted instance we have of this in Xerxes, who, as Plutarch informs us in his 'Life of Themistocles,' prayed to Arimanius, that all his enemies might ever be of the same mind with the Greeks, to abuse and expel the bravest men among them. Or, if he can prove, that the Jews or Christians held the being of two chief causes, good and evil, out of the mixture of which all things were made, and that there is a perpetual struggle between the good and evil principles, sometimes the one prevailing, sometimes the other; though, it is true, they held that the good principle will finally be victorious, and the evil principle be overcome. Zoroaster indeed, according to Dr. Prideaux,‡ introduced a superior principle above these two. But this was a reformation in the religion of the Magians. And if so, it may be justly supposed that he had learned it from the Jews, with whose sacred writings, according to the account given of him, he was well acquainted.

Another thing I had said concerning the ancient Persians and the Magi was, that they worshipped the sun and fire. The author absolutely denies this, and affirms that they worshipped the one true God and him only. But I scarce know any thing in which the best ancient writers that give any account of the Persians and their religion, are more universally agreed in than this, that they paid an adoration to the sun and to fire.§ Herodotus had travelled over

this with 2 Kings xvii. there is a more authentic proof of their being addicted to idolatry in those ancient times than any testimony that can be produced relating to that time to the contrary.

* Dr. Hyde acknowledges that many of the Persians maintained that these two principles were co-eternal, 'De Relig. vet. Pers.' pp. 164, 295, and, probably from them, Manes, who was a Persian, derived his doctrine.

† Plutarch expressly affirms, as from the Persians themselves, that they were taught to sacrifice not only to the god Oromazes but to the evil one Arimanius; to the one for obtaining good things, to the other for averting evil. See 'Plutarch de Isid. et Isirid.'

‡ Prideaux's Connection, part i. book iv. p. M. 214, 215.

§ Dr. Hyde himself, notwithstanding all his prejudices in favour of the Persians, owns enough to fix the charge upon them of paying an undue idolatrous veneration to the sun and planets. He acknowledges, that to the true religion they added Sabaism,

several of the Persian provinces to collect materials for his history ; and his accounts of the ancient Persians and their religion in his time are much more to be depended on than those of the modern Persian writers, who are extremely inaccurate, and full of blunders and inconsistencies in what relates to the ancient history and chronology of the Persians. And he expressly affirms that they worshipped the sun ; and that they sacrificed not only to the sun,

giving too much veneration to the stars and elements, see ' *De Relig. vet. Pers.*' cap. i. p. 2, and cap. viii. p. 154. He observes from Sharistani, that there were two sorts of Sabians, the one better, viz. the worshippers of the planets or stars, the other worse, viz. the worshippers of idols or images, and that the Persians were of the former sort, cap. i. p. 5, cap. iii. p. 88. He saith that the worship the Persians paid the planets was immediate, and not by images as the Sabians ; where he owns the Persians paid a worship to the planets, though he calls it a civil worship, cap. iii. p. 98. He observes, that though Xerxes destroyed the other Grecian temples and altars, yet he spared the Delian temple of Apollo and the temple at Ephesus ; because the former was dedicated to the sun, the latter to Diana or the moon, cap. iii. p. 98. He owns that in the military processions of the Persians they carried the image of the sun, and did not march till after sun rising, that they might first pay a due respect to the sun, whose favourable aspect they thought might be of advantage to them, p. 121. He acknowledges that they prostrated themselves before the fire, and paid a great veneration to it, as a pure thing, representing the planet Mars in colour and God in purity, and therefore the holy fire, kept in their temple, was called the fire of Mars, p. 11. It is true he affirms, as I have just now observed, that the worship they paid to the fire and to the sun was only a civil worship ; but I cannot see how this can be defended, for it was not upon a civil, but upon a religious account, that they worshipped the sun and the fire. The worship they paid them was in their solemn sacred ceremonies and acts of religion. All that can be gathered from the account the doctor gives us is, that they did not regard them as the only or supreme deity ; and that the worship they rendered to them was a relative worship, or a subordinate religious worship. And if this be allowed to be an excuse, it will excuse the worship paid by other heathens to images, as well as the worship paid by the Persians to the fire ; since the more learned among them made use of the very same pretences to defend themselves, see ' *Mrs. Tyr. Dist.*' 38, ' *Julian. Oper.*' pp. 537, 5, 39, ' *Varro apud August. de Civit. Dei.*' lib. vii. cap. 5, and I cannot but think the reflection of Clemens Alexandrinus a very just one ; who, after having observed that the Magi and Persians worshipped fire, and that they look upon water and fire as the only images of the gods, blames them for their ignorance. Whilst they think they flee from error, says he, they fall into another delusion. They do not suppose wood and stones to be images of the gods as the Greeks, nor the Ibis Ichneumon, as the Egyptians ; but fire and water, as the philosophers. And then he observes that, in process of time, they worshipped images in a human form, see ' *Clem. Alex. Protrept.*' p. 43, edit. Paris, 1641. We learn from Plutarch, that Artaxerxes Mnemon prostrated himself before the statue of Juno, and offered up prayers, and caused many rich offerings to be made to her for the recovery of Atopa. And he also tells us of a temple at Ecbatana, in which Aspasia, by the order of Artaxerxes, was made a priestess to Diana Anitis, see ' *Plut. in Artaxer.*' And he there also informs us of a temple in the city of Pasargatis, dedicated to a goddess who presided in war, whom he does not name, but conjectures to be the very same with Minerva, into which temple the Persian kings were wont to enter before they were crowned by the priests. Dr. Hyde indeed will not allow that the Persians worshipped either Juno or Diana, though the contrary seems plain from many testimonies of the ancients concerning Diana Persica, and from several inscriptions on coins : but by Antis, whom Plutarch mentions, he says is to be understood the planet Venus. He acknowledges that Artaxerxes ordered the statue of Venus to be worshipped, and temples and priests to be consecrated to her ; and that the worship of Venus continued among the Persians beyond the time of Antiochus Epiphanes. He goes on to tell us the Persian names of Venus, and says he has not found that they had any other statues than that of Venus, see ' *Hyde de Relig. vet. Pers.*' cap. iii. pp. 90—93.

By all these things we may judge whether the ancient Persians were such enemies to idolatry as our author represents them ; and whether it be likely that it was from them that the Jews learned their utter aversion to all idolatry ; all the different kinds and forms of which, and those in use among the Persians as well as the rest, were strictly forbidden in the Jewish sacred writings, and represented as highly displeasing to God.

but to the moon, earth, fire, water, and the winds, and had done so from ancient times. 'Herod.' lib. i. cap. 131. And he introduces this account by saying, *Ἰέρσας ὅτα νόμοισι τοῖσι κρεωμένος* 'I know that the Persians use these laws or customs.' And again he concludes his account of the Persian customs, with saying, 'That these things he knew to be true, and could undoubtedly affirm.' Xenophon, who had been in Asia, and attended Cyrus the younger, and who was no stranger to the Persian customs, in his ascent of Cyrus, speaks of horses dedicated to the sun, lib. iv., and many ancient writers mention the same custom among the Persians. And this had been of long standing among those that paid an idolatrous worship to the sun, of which we have an instance, 2 Kings xxiii. 5—11, where we read of horses dedicated to the sun by some of the idolatrous kings of Judah, which, with the priests that burnt incense to the sun, were exterminated by that reforming king, Josiah. The same Xenophon, in his 'Cypœdia' tells us, that horses were sacrificed to the sun, and certain victims killed to the earth, according to the directions of the Magi; and represents Cyrus as sacrificing on the summit of a mountain, according to the custom of his country, to Jove paternal, and the sun, &c. and as offering a prayer to him. Strabo, in his account of the Persians, affirms, that they worshipped the sun and that they prayed to the fire. And concerning the Caramanians, or inhabitants of Kerinan, a province of Persia, observes that they sacrificed an ass to Mars, 'Geograph.' lib. xv. Dr. Hyde indeed denies this, because the Persians do not think Mars a god, 'de Rel. vet. Persar.' cap. 3 p. 89. This may be very true of the modern Persians; but he produces no authority to show that the ancient Persians did not look upon Mars as a deity. And it appears from his own account, that they had a particular veneration for the planet Mars, and called their holy fire the fire of Mars. Q. Curtius, therefore, speaks very agreeably to the ancient customs of the Persians, when he represents Darius, before his battle with Alexander, as invoking the sun, moon, and the eternal fires. The account Suidas gives of the Persians in what the ancient writers generally agree in, that they thought the sun to be Mithras, to whom they offered many sacrifices. That the Persians worshipped the sun under the name of Mithras was so well known, that the Comans, who frequently adopted the worship of other nations, did, in imitation of them, pay a religious worship to the sun under the name of Mithras. Hence there are altars and coins with inscriptions to 'god the sun, the invincible Mithras;' to 'the sun, the invincible Mithras;' to 'the most holy sun,' &c. 'Deo Soli Invicto Mithræ; et soli invicto Mithræ; et sanctissimo soli, &c. et numini invicto soli Mithræ Ara.' Some of the Persian kings, particularly Saporess, persecuted the Christians because they refused to worship the sun; and Sozomes informs us concerning Ushazanes, who had formerly been preceptor to Saporess, that having in compliance with the king, worshipped the sun, he afterwards fell into a deep sorrow on the account of it; and being asked by the king the reason of

his sadness, he said to him, 'It grieves me that I live and see the sun, when I deserved to have died long ago; since for thy sake, against the judgment of my own mind, I have worshipped the sun, τὸν ἥλιον προσεκύνησα.' See Sozomen Hist. Eccles. lib. ii. cap. 8, 'Niceph. Hist. Eccles. lib. viii. cap. 36. Dr. Hyde indeed expressly denies that the Persians ever called the fire or the sun God, or that they ever prayed to it or worshipped it with intention as God. 'De Relig. vet. Pers.' cap. 1, p. 14. But he owns that by Mithras they understood the sun; and that the Persians regarded Mithras as a god, comes to us with as concurring an evidence as any thing in all antiquity. Nor has the learned doctor any authority to produce against it but the testimony of the modern Gaures and Persian priests, who deny that they worship the sun or any but God alone, cap. 1. pp. 5, 9, 12, cap. 4. p. 108. But we are not to confound the religion of the modern Gaures with that of the ancient Persians or Magians, as several learned persons are of opinion Dr. Hyde has too much done. It seems manifest, as I have already hinted, from the accounts given us of the Gaures, that there are several things in their religion, considered in its present state, which have been taken from the Jews and Christians, according to the account Dr. Hyde himself gives us of that Zoroaster, from whom they pretend to derive their religion; he had read the Jewish Scriptures, and his religion had in it a great mixture of Judaism, because he mixed some of the Mosaic rites and usages with the religion of the Magians. But if he did so, it only proves the high veneration he had for the law of Moses. And it may reasonably be concluded that from that law he derived more excellent notions of God and of his worship, and was thereby enabled to reform the notions the Persians entertained of the Deity, and to bring them from their grosser idolatry to a greater refinement in their worship.

This writer will have Esdras the prophet, whom he tells us Zoroaster served, and whom he supposes to be the author of the second book of Esdras, to be a different person from Ezra the scribe. But it is manifest, that the author of the second book of Esdras pretends to be the same with Ezra the scribe, as appears from the account he gives of himself, 2 Esdras i. 1, 2, compared with Ezra vii. 1, &c. I would observe by the way, that our author pretends here to have a very good opinion of the second book of Esdras; and he tells us, p. 212, that 'Zoroaster, as all the Persian and Arabian writers agree, had been a servant in his younger years to the prophet Esdras.' This indeed is carrying it too far; for it is not true that all the Persian and Arabian writers agree in this. Some of the Persian writers tell us, that Zoroaster was a disciple of the prophets Elijah and Elisha. Others say that it was one of the disciples of the prophet Jeremiah with whom he served. And Dr. Hyde, with whom agrees Dr. Prideaux, thinks it is most likely that he served the prophet Daniel.* But allowing our author's account,

* Concerning this, the reader may consult Dr. Prideaux's Connection, part I, book iv. pp. 224, 225.

that he had been a servant to Ezra, then it may be justly concluded, that Zoroaster learned many things in his religion under Ezra, that great restorer of the Jewish state. So that, according to this account, instead of pretending that the Jews learned their religion from the Persians, it may with much greater reason be alleged, that the Persians learned their religion from the Jews in these points, in which Zoroaster reformed the ancient religion of the Magians.* Our author seems aware of this, and therefore, though he sometimes speaks with great respect of Zoroaster, as an eminent reformer and law-giver, yet at other times he thinks fit to represent him as having rather corrupted than reformed the ancient Magian religion; he had mentioned it before, p. 145, as if it was a genuine prophecy written about 400 years before Christ. And the reason is very evident; it is because he would insinuate, that our Lord Jesus Christ and his apostles learned their doctrines concerning the resurrection and the last judgment, and a state of future rewards and punishments, from that book; and that they have revealed nothing to the world on these heads, but what was as plainly and expressly contained in that book before. And accordingly he tells us, that ‘the twenty-fourth and twenty-fifth chapters of St. Matthew’s gospel are a plain transcript out of this prophet, and a great part of it almost verbatim,’ p. 212. The reader could not but know before this how little this writer’s confident assertions are to be depended upon, and here is another manifest instance of it. As to the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew, there is not the least foundation for this pretence. There is something said concerning the future judgment, 2 Esdras vii. 30—36; but it is so far from being almost verbatim the same with the account given of it by our Saviour, Matt. xxv. that it is as different from it as any two passages relating to that future judgment can well be supposed to be. And though there are some passages in this apocryphal book, chap. vi. 24—28, ix. 3, xiii. 29—38, that bear a likeness to some expressions made use of by our Saviour in the twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew,

* Dr. Hyde, who is our author’s oracle, plainly affirms, that the religion of the Persians agrees in many things with the Jewish, and that a considerable part of it was taken from it. It is part of the title of his tenth chapter; ‘*Persarum religio in multis convenit cum Judaica, et magna ex parte ab ea desumpta fuit.*’ And indeed this is incontestably true, if understood of the Persian religion as laid down in the book Zind, which they believe was compiled by Zerdusht or Zoroaster; concerning which, the reader may consult the account Dr. Prideaux gives of it from Dr. Hyde. See Prideaux’s Connect. part I. book iv. A. M. 225. But I must own, I cannot think the religion taught in that book was the religion of the Persians so long since as the days of Darius Hystaspes, in whose reign it is pretended this Zerdusht lived and wrote this book. If this was the case, I cannot see upon what foundation Homan could procure a decree from Artaxerxes, for extirpating the Jews, under a pretence that they were a people ‘whose laws were diverse from all people,’ Esther iii. 8; since, according to this account, the religion of the Persians, and which was professed by the king and court and all the nobility (see Prid. *ibid.* p. 223), had before that time adopted most of the Jewish rites and institutions, whereby they were peculiarly distinguished from other nations. It seems therefore to me, that the book is not of such antiquity as is supposed; or at least the religion there contained did not become the national religion of the Persians till long after; and that therefore no certain argument can be produced from that book, much less from the authority of the modern Persians, to show what was the religion of the Persians in the most ancient times.

yet to pretend that the twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew, and our Saviour's admirable predictions there concerning the destruction of Jerusalem and the calamities that were coming on the Jewish nation, is plainly a transcript out of the second book of Esdras, will appear to any one that carefully compares them, to be so wild and extravagant an assertion, that few but this writer would have ventured upon it. The compiler of the second book of Esdras has indeed manifest allusions to several passages in the New Testament, not only in the Evangelists, but in St. Paul's epistles, and in the Revelations of St. John; and it is evident to any one that reads that book, that it was forged after the time of our Saviour, see particularly chap. vii. 28, 29. And this apocryphal piece, which is of no authority, which never was known or acknowledged among the Jews, as it must have been if it had been the genuine work of Esdras; which has several absurdities and falsehoods in it, and is rejected by all the learned as spurious; this is what our author, in his great kindness to Christianity, would put upon the world as an original, from whence the gospel-doctrines taught by our Saviour concerning the resurrection, a future judgment, &c. are taken.

But to return to the account he gives us of Zoroaster, he observes, that he thought 'the punishment of the wicked would only be between death and the resurrection; at which time he supposed, that being thoroughly purged and cleansed from their sins, they would be restored to happiness, pp. 2, 14. I do not know any occasion he has to mention this here, but that he may vent his spleen against Christianity with respect to the endless punishment of the wicked in a future state. This is a doctrine taught by our Saviour, who has expressly declared that the wicked 'shall go away into everlasting punishment.' But this writer thinks fit to represent this doctrine as a piece of diabolism, and as owing to the malice of the Jews, who it seems invented this 'eternal, implacable, and inexorable revenge, and herein worshipped the devil more effectually than ever the Persians did.' And he calls it an 'establishing the eternal dominion of the devil in hell over the far greater part of God's creatures.' An odd way this of establishing the devil's dominion, to say, that he shall be eternally punished, and be distinguished above others by the greatness of his punishment, as he is by his crimes. But we are never to expect a fair representation from this writer of any fact or any doctrine where revelation is concerned. I do not wonder at the aversion some people show to the doctrine of the perpetual punishment of the wicked, which is what no good man needs to be afraid of. But this we may plainly see, that our author's pretended zeal for the doctrine of a judgment to come, and a state of future retributions with which he makes a mighty parade when it is for his purpose to do so, come to very little; since he takes care to reduce the punishment of the wicked within such narrow bounds, as if generally believed, would tend in a great measure to free them from their terrors; in which, what real advantage he can propose to mankind or to the cause of virtue, is hard to see.

Celsus himself, as I had occasion to observe,* was so sensible of the usefulness and importance of that doctrine which our author sets himself to expose, that he was loth Christianity should have the honour of it, but asserted it as a common notion that obtained almost among all mankind. Nor is it true that Zoroaster himself absolutely denied the everlasting torments of the wicked. He taught, as Dr. Prideaux informs us from the Persian writers, that at the end of the world after the judgment, the angel of darkness and his disciples should go into a world of their own, where they shall suffer in everlasting darkness the punishment of their evil deeds.† And this writer himself, though here he thinks fit to give it as the doctrine of Zoroaster, that the punishment of the wicked would only be between death and the resurrection; at which time they would be restored to happiness; yet in his letter to Eusebius, he represents it as the doctrine of Zoroaster, from whom the Jews and Mohammed received it, that some of the wicked at least would be 'punished in hell for ever, or to all eternity.' See Let. to Euseb. pp. 43, 44.‡

He had expressly affirmed in his former book, that from the days of Moses to the time of Ezra, which was a period of about eleven hundred years, the 'whole nation of the Jews had been deistical materialists or Sadducees;' and that they never embraced the doctrines of the immortality of the soul, the resurrection of the body, a final judgment, and a future state of rewards and punishments, till they received them from the Persians after the captivity. I showed the contrary from several testimonies in the sacred writings. He has not thought proper to consider any one of those testimonies, but pronounces very magisterially, that all 'that I have offered on this subject is such a run of poor systematical stuff, that it deserves no notice, p. 215. But I doubt not he had a much better reason for taking no notice of it, and that is, that he found himself not able to answer the evidence that was brought. It will be easily acknowledged, that the immortality of the soul and a future state is not so clearly and expressly revealed and inculcated in the Old Testament, as it is under the New; but it does not follow that therefore it was not known or believed at all; which yet seems to be the course of this writer's argument. And as to what he adds, that David would not have been at such a loss to account for the prosperity of the wicked and the sufferings of good men in this life, had he known any thing of a future state of retribution, this is not a necessary consequence. For even allowing a future state of retri-

* See Divine Authority, p. 282.

† Prid. Connect. part I. book iv. pp. 21, 4.

‡ Dr. Hyde, in his preface to his book, 'de Relig. vet. Pers.' speaking of the book Sadder, which he represents as a book of great authority, extracted out of the works of Zerdusht or Zoroaster, and containing an authentic account of his doctrines, observes, 'that it appoints hell and eternal damnation as the punishment for all sins.' See also to the same purpose, cap. xxxiii. pp. 402, 439, where the reader may find a passage in the book Sadder, in which those who have done evil works are represented as kept in a 'state of confinement and punishment to all eternity.'

butions, there will still be a great and real difficulty in accounting for the present dispensations of divine providence. The grievous calamities that often befall good men, and the prosperity of tyrants and unjust oppressors, have often puzzled contemplative persons that have firmly believed future retributions. And under the Moisaical economy, where there were more express promises of temporal blessings to the righteous, the difficulty was considerably heightened. But that David did believe a future state, and comfort himself with the prospect of it, appears from the testimonies I produced, and to which this writer has nothing to reply. With respect to the celebrated passage in Job, which he mentions, it cannot, without the utmost constraint, be interpreted of a mere restoration to his former temporal prosperity. The expressions are as strong to signify a resurrection of the body as can well be supposed; nor do I see any expressions he could have made use of to signify this, but what might have been as easily evaded as these.*

Our author concludes this section with telling us what mighty things he could do if he pleased, to destroy the authority of the book of Daniel. But it seems 'the errors of that book are too many and too gross to be insisted on;' and therefore he passes them over in his tenderness, as it is to be supposed, to the authority of the sacred writings. Only he gives us a hint, that the Daniel that was taken captive the first of Nebuchadnezzar, could not be the same person with that Daniel who decided the case between Susannah and the elders seventy-seven years after. Those that stand up for the authority of that story, suppose it happened at the very time of the Babylonish captivity, many years before the time this writer is pleased to fix for it. But if that story of Susannah be inconsistent with what is said in the book of Daniel, it proves nothing against the authority of that book; it only proves that that story is not to be depended on, which is of small authority, and never was acknowledged by the Jews as belonging to the book of Daniel.

* See concerning this, Bishop Sherlock's *Use and Intent of Prophecy*, dissert. 2, and Alb. Schulten's late very learned commentary on Job.

CHAPTER X.

The restoring the kingdom to Israel in a temporal sense, and the bringing all nations into subjection to the Jews, not an essential character of the Messiah according to the prophets. What he offers to prove that the apostles were not under an infallible guidance examined. His account of the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost, and especially the strange and absurd representation he makes of the gifts of tongues, considered and exposed. Concerning the power of working miracles in the apostolical age. It did not depend upon those that had this power, to make use of it as they themselves pleased for the propagation of error as well as truth.

OUR author begins 'his eighth section, with assuring his reader that my 'twelfth chapter, and almost every thing that follows to the end of the book, is little more than one continued rant.' And he had better have contented himself with some such general answers as this to my whole book, which would have been very near as enlightening to the world, as the book he has now written. But after abusing me for near a page together, he comes to vindicate what he had said concerning Jesus's disclaiming his being the Jewish prophetic Messiah. He had expressly declared, that Jesus renounced his being the Messiah in the sense of the prophets, and that he died upon that renunciation. I shewed, on the contrary, that Jesus did all along, during the whole course of his personal ministry, on all proper occasions, declare himself to be the Christ or Messiah: that he commended the faith of those who owned him to be such: that at his death he avowed it in the most solemn manner before the high priest, and the whole Jewish council: that it was a truth which he sealed with his blood: that after his resurrection he inculcated this upon his disciples: and that whereas they were commissioned to preach the gospel to all nations, this was one great article of the gospel which they preached to the world, under the direction of his Spirit. There is nothing in all this but what every man knows to be true who has ever read the New Testament. And yet this writer still insists upon it, that not only Jesus was not the Messiah according to the prophets; (for if he had said no more than this, he had acted the part of an unbelieving Jew, which we should not have much wondered at) but would face the world down by dint of assurance, contrary to plain fact that Jesus himself disclaimed and renounced his being the Messiah foretold by the prophets. The only argument he brings for it is this, 'that the Messiah, according to the prophets, was to be a great temporal prince, and to restore the kingdom to the house of David; whereas our Saviour Jesus Christ disclaimed all such temporal power, and declared before Pilate that his kingdom was not of this world.' But it doth not follow from our Saviour's declaring, that 'his kingdom was not of this world,' that therefore he disclaimed his being the Messiah foretold by the prophets, when we have his own most express declarations that he was so.

All that follows from it is this, that since it was manifest that he all along to his death, declared himself to be the Christ foretold by the prophets, and yet did also declare, that his kingdom was not of a worldly nature, and that he was not a temporal prince in opposition to Cæsar; and therefore, if our Saviour may be allowed to be a good judge of the true sense and intention of these prophecies, the Messiah there spoken of was not to be merely a temporal prince, nor his kingdom to be like the kingdoms of this world, established for secular worldly purposes. It is true, that the Jews did then generally understand the prophecies in a different sense. They expected a Messiah, that was to be a national deliverer of Israel, and to raise them to a mighty degree of power and dominion above the Gentiles. And our author in this takes the part of the Jews against our Saviour. In his language, to be the Messiah in the Jewish national sense, and in the prophetic sense, is the same thing. See *Mor. Phil.* Vol. I. p. 331. To be the Messiah, and to be the 'national Deliverer and Saviour of the Jews, and the restorer of the kingdom to Israel,' in a temporal sense, are with him terms of the same signification, pp. 349, 350. And accordingly he affirms over and over, that the Jewish Christians universally believed in Christ only as 'their national restorer and deliverer,' p. 367, and as 'the hope and salvation of Israel only, or as the restorer of their kingdom,' p. 377. This was the idea he gave of the Messiah and his kingdom in his former book; and he frequently repeats it in this. He expressly again and again declares it to be an essential character of the Messiah, according to the prophets, that he was to be a conquering prince of the house of David, and the founder of a glorious temporal kingdom; that he was to subdue all other nations, and bring them into subjection to the Jews to rebuild the temple in a more splendid magnificent manner than ever; and to restore their ancient priesthood and sacrifices, and the whole legal economy, and to extend this to all nations.* And now it is easy to see what an idea this worthy writer intends, as far as it is in his power, to convey to the world of our Saviour Jesus Christ. It is incontestably evident, that he himself claimed to be the Messiah foretold by the prophets, and persisted in this declaration to his death; and that all the apostles that preached the gospel in his name, and the apostle Paul as much as any of them, taught the same thing. And yet our author denies, that Jesus was or could be the Messiah foretold by the prophets; for he expressly declares, and insists upon it, that he wanted an essential character of the Messiah. And if this be not to justify the Jews in condemning our Lord, for falsely assuming the character of the Messiah, *Matt.* xxvi. 63—66. *Luke* xxii. 70, 71, it is hard to know what can be accounted so.

But as to the main point this writer should have proved, this he passes over as so evident, that it needs no proof at all. 'That the Jewish Messiah,' says he, 'according to all the prophecies con-

* See pp. 225, 251, and Letter to Euseb. pp. 18, 23, 30, 31, 34, 36.

cerning him, was to be a great temporal prince, and to restore the kingdom to the house of David (*viz.* in a literal carnal sense) is so very evident, that I should scorn to dispute with a man who would deny it,' p. 220; this is pleasant enough. That is, he scorns to dispute with any man, that will not yield him the point in question. And if he had scorned to write on this subject at all, or to have troubled the world either with his former book or this, it would have been no loss to mankind, and no disadvantage to his own reputation. In the books he has undertaken to answer, it was shown, that the kingdom attributed to the Messiah in the prophets, was not like the kingdoms of this world in its nature and designs, but created for far nobler purposes: that the principal benefits of it, and in which the glory of it is described as chiefly consisting, are spiritual and divine. And whereas this writer had represented, that he was to be a national deliverer and Saviour of the Jews only, and that St. Paul's preaching him up as the author of a new dispensation, and as the Saviour of all men, Jews and Gentiles, was a renouncing the plain sense of the prophets; it was shown from the prophecies themselves, that the Messiah was to be the introducer of a new and spiritual dispensation; that his kingdom was to be an universal blessing, and that the benefits of it and the salvation of which he was to be the author,* should not be confined to the Jews, but should extend equally to all nations without distinction. Those passages upon which the notion of the Messiah's being a temporal prince, and a national deliverer of the Jews seems to be principally founded were considered; and it was shown, that the narrow sense the Jews would put upon them, to accommodate them to their own prejudices and carnal views, is contrary to the plain design of the prophecies, when duly considered and compared together in their just connexion and harmony. Our author is pleased to pass all this by, without notice. He is apprehensive, that I may 'blame or censure him, for not having taken particular notice enough of my argument in this chapter:' but he adds, 'the candid reader, I am sure, will have good-nature enough to forgive my not doing what I could not possibly do.' p. 226. And I am of opinion, the reader will easily believe, that if he did not take 'a particular notice of the argument' so as to answer it, it was because he could not do it.†

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He proposes, p. 226, to come to the argument of my thirteenth chapter. He had asserted, that the apostles never so much as pretended to be under the guidance of an infallible Spirit; that though this 'has been liberally granted them by our Christian zealots and system-mongers, yet it was what they themselves never claimed,' see *Mor. Phil.* vol. I. pp. 80, 81. In opposition to this it was plainly proved from many express testimonies, that if by infallibility is meant their being under an unerring guidance of the Holy Spirit, so as to be kept from error or mistake in delivering and teaching the doctrines and laws of Christ, it is certain that this was what they claimed.* Our author takes no notice of these passages; but first repeats what he had said in his former book, and which I had fully considered and obviated, that the difference and divisions among the apostles, must have exposed and confuted any such pretence; and then observes, that if ever they had been under the infallible guidance of the Holy Ghost, one would have expected it when they met in council at Jerusalem, to debate on a point of vast importance to the whole church. And 'yet we find no such unerring Spirit among them;' which he proves, because 'had they been infallible, they must have been all of one mind, and no such heats, differences, and disturbances could have arisen in the

nificent, but figurative expressions. Their accession to the true church, and becoming the members of it, is described by their coming to Zion, and bringing their riches and glory thither; as is their conversion to the worship of the true God, by their bringing presents, silver and gold to the house of the Lord, and their offering sacrifices on his altar. This, as is usual with the prophets, is spoken in allusion to the way of worship that obtained under the Mosaic law; though it appears from other passages, both in Isaiah and other prophets, that economy should be abolished under the Messiah. Concerning which, see *Div. Author.* pp. 209, &c. The peace, the purity, the vast diffusion of the church, signified here and in several other prophecies by the name of Zion, is there also described in the pompous figures of the prophetic style. That the words Zion, Jerusalem, &c., in the prophetic writings, are not always to be taken in the narrow sense the author would put upon them, is well shown, *Euseb.* pp. 509, 510, &c., see also *Div. Author.* p. 213. But all the expressions are no more to be understood in the strict literal sense, than when it is there said, that 'the gates of Zion shall not be shut day nor night; that the sun should be no more her light by day, nor for brightness should the moon give light unto her;' and that her 'sun should no more go down, nor her moon withdraw itself,' verses 11, 19, 20. All that can be justly gathered from the figurative representation, is, that a time is foretold when the church should enjoy a state of great peace, as well as purity and righteousness; and the obstinate enemies of Christ's kingdom should be destroyed, or not have it in their power to harass and persecute as before. And it seems plainly to relate to the time the apostle Paul speaks of, when 'the fulness of the Gentile should be brought in,' and 'all Israel should be saved;' and which he represents as a happy time of universal joy, and as it were, 'life from the dead,' *Rom.* xi. 15, 25, 26, 31, 32. This is a state of things highly to be desired, and the prospect of which cannot but give pleasure to every well disposed mind. Nor is there any thing in this inconsistent with the nature of Christianity, as this writer insinuates. For though our Saviour taught his disciples to expect sufferings and persecutions, to which he knew they would be exposed after his death; this does not prove that there should never be a time, when any of his disciples in particular, or his church in general, should be in a state of external rest and prosperity, and free from persecution. And it appears from the revelation he gave to his servant John, that such a time there shall be. This writer may ridicule this if he pleases, and call it enthusiasm, but no man of sense will think one jot the worse of it, for the measure he is pleased to bestow upon it.

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council.' p. 227. There might be some pretence for urging this, if it was alleged that all the private Christians or believers in the church of Jerusalem, were under the unerring guidance of the Holy Spirit. It is evident, that in that council not merely the apostles were convened, but many others : that among the rest, the Judaizing teachers and Pharisees that had opposed St. Paul, were there as well as St. Paul and Barnabas. And it was but proper to hear what the one had to say as well as the other. It is also allowed, that many of the Jewish Christian converts still laboured under great prejudices. And it was agreeable to the will of God, that they should be treated in a mild and condescending way, and that their prejudices should be gradually removed. But there is nothing in the whole account from whence it can be made to appear, that the apostles were not under the unerring guidance of the Holy Ghost in that council. The only apostles of whose speaking in that council we have any account, besides St. Paul, were St. Peter and St. James. And they entirely harmonized among themselves, and with the truth. It is perfectly consistent with the supposition of an infallible guidance, that there should be reasoning and deliberation in considering the point before them ; and then that God should so direct and influence their deliberations, as to guide them unerringly upon the whole. And accordingly the decision they came to was wise, and just, and moderate. This author would have me explain the particular manner in which the apostles were inspired or illuminated ; as if it were any argument against the truth or reality of their being inspired, that we cannot distinctly explain the manner in which this revelation was communicated to their minds. The impertinency of this I had occasion to observe above, chap. ii. It is sufficient, that as the apostles did profess to be unerringly guided in delivering the doctrines and laws of Christ, so God himself bore them witness that this pretence was true, by confirming the gospel they taught by the most illustrious and extraordinary attestations.

After some farther abuse, which this writer plentifully bestows upon me, he proceeds, p. 228, to consider what I had offered, concerning the extraordinary gifts and powers of the Spirit. He had said, that they who were endued with those gifts and powers might make either a good or bad use of them, as much as of any natural faculties or talents. But now he blames me for imagining, that he supposed, that all or any of them were permanent standing qualities, like the natural powers and faculties of the mind. The contrary to this, he says, is evident enough, and that he very well knew it, though he did not then choose to speak it out, p. 229. It seems that in his former book it best served his purpose to express himself, as if he looked upon them to be permanent standing habits ; and now it will best answer his end to deny that any of them were permanent standing habits at all. But let us consider the matter, as he is now pleased to represent it, and see what he can make of it.

P. 229, &c. he runs out into a very remarkable excursion on the

gifts of tongues. Here he throws off all disguise, and does all that is in his power to expose Christianity, and the proofs of it, to the contempt and derision of mankind. The whole of what he says on this head tends to show, that this gift was only a mad enthusiastic impulse: that those that had or exercised this gift 'could not speak those languages at all with any sense, coherence, or consistency:' that 'they were exactly the same with our modern French prophets:' that 'some of those tongue-gifted people, by practice and strength of imaginations, could work themselves up into those raptures, extasies, and strange preter-natural motions, and thereby lose their reason and senses almost at any time; but others could not, and therefore were not so much favoured by the Spirit: 'that whilst they were 'under this mechanical power and operation of the Spirit, they had no reason or understanding left of their own.' He expressly calls them 'frantic fits,' and declares that they 'were mad, or out of their wits for the time,' pp. 229—233.

The judicious reader cannot but observe here the strange inconsistency of this author. He first supposes that there were extraordinary gifts and powers of the Spirit poured forth in the apostolical times, and that they who had them were at liberty to use them either to good or bad purposes; and that whenever they had those gifts and powers, they were left to a discretionary use of them, p. 229. And yet immediately after represents those gifts, particularly the gift of tongues, as 'frantic fits' of enthusiasm, in which they quite lost the use of their reason and senses, and had no reason or understanding left of their own, and were mad or out of their wits for the time. But it is hard to find any sense or consistency in this way of talking. This writer is one of the first that hath supposed that a frantic fit may be used with discretion; and that when a man happens to be in such a fit, and is mad or out of his wits for the time, and has no reason or understanding left, yet he is capable of making a discretionary use of that fit of madness, as much as any man in his senses can make use of any natural faculty or habit.

But let us examine more particularly the account he is pleased to give us of the gift of tongues. He first pretends to consider the original account that is given of it in the second chapter of the Acts of the apostles. The representation he makes of what happened on the day of Pentecost, is to this purpose. That those on whom the Holy Ghost fell, uttered 'some incoherent words' in different languages, 'but no man could tell in any language, what they were talking about, or what they aimed at in such a confusion of voices.' And thus 'the whole company stood either wondering or laughing, till Peter stood up, and in a rational coherent discourse, let the people into the design of all this.' And 'upon the whole,' he says, 'it seems very plain, that while the hundred and twenty were talking all together in different languages, no man in any language could make any thing of it, or understand any thing by it,' pp. 229, 230.

First he asserts that there were a hundred and twenty who all spoke together in different languages, as if the text expressly said this. But there is no proof that there were a hundred and twenty on whom

the Holy Ghost fell, on the day of pentecost,* or if there were, that all the hundred and twenty spoke at once. How many of them spoke, and in what order we cannot tell; whether they spoke one after another in different languages, or divided themselves among the multitude; in which case several of them might speak to different persons at the same time. And any one that considers the vast numbers of persons that were convened at Jerusalem at their solemn feasts, may easily conceive, that many of them might speak at once to different parts of the crowd without confusion. But whoever they were that spoke, it is not true which he so confidently avouches to be very plain, that 'while they were talking in different languages, no man in any language could make any thing of it, or understand any thing by it.' For we are expressly told, that the multitude that were met together, of different nations, said, 'We do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works, or wonderful things τὰ μεγαλεῖα of God.' From whence it is evident, that they did understand them, and found that they discoursed about excellent and divine things, worthy of God. There were others indeed that mocking said, These men are full of new wine. These probably were such as did not understand the languages they were speaking in, and to whom, therefore, it must appear barbarism and confusion; for those that understood them spoke and thought otherwise. Then Peter rose up, and this author himself owns, that this discourse was rational and coherent. He addressed himself particularly to the men of Judea, and among other things told them, that Jesus whom they crucified, 'being risen from the dead, and by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear.' Would not this have been a fine thing to appeal to, as a demonstrative evidence, that Jesus was risen and exalted at the right hand of God, and that God had made him both Lord and Christ: if his disciples had only been, as this writer represents it, like a company of madmen, all talking together à kind of gibberish; and uttering some incoherent words without meaning or connexion, and with such a confusion of voices, that no mortal could make any thing of what they said? the effect that followed upon it, the conversion of three thousand persons, who continued stedfastly in the apostle's doctrine, was an undeniable proof of the greatness and wonderfulness of the

* We read indeed of an hundred and twenty disciples who met together, Acts i. 15, but it is not likely that all these were continually together, and especially early in the morning. In the last verse of the preceding chapter, we read of Matthias's being numbered with the eleven apostles; and in the next words we are told, that when the day of Pentecost was come, they were altogether in one place; which may well be understood as relating to the apostles, that had been mentioned just before. And accordingly in the ninth verse, where we have an account of Peter's beginning to speak, we read only of Peter standing up with the eleven, which makes it probable that they were only the twelve apostles that were then together. And indeed it was to the apostles, that the promise of being baptized with the Holy Ghost within a few days, was particularly made by our Saviour; and it was to them that the command was directed to stay at Jerusalem, and wait for the accomplishment of that promise, as is manifest from Acts i. 2, 4, 5. Though afterwards the Holy Ghost was poured forth on many others, see Acts iv. 31, vi. 3.

event, and what a mighty impression it made upon those that were witnesses to it; since it brought so many at once to acknowledge a crucified Jesus as the Christ, contrary to all their prejudices; that is, to acknowledge one for the Christ, or true Messiah, who but a little before had been condemned as a deceiver, and put to an ignominious death by the influence of the chief priests and Sanhedrim, whose authority and decisions were of so vast a weight with all of that nation.

The account this writer next pretends to give of the gift of tongues in the church of Corinth, pp. 231, 232, is equally unfair and scandalous. He represents them as a parcel of mad enthusiasts met together, that did not speak 'any consistent sense that could be understood or interpreted by any one present; and who by practice and strength of imagination wrought themselves up into those raptures and ecstasies, in which they had no reason, or understanding left.' He represents it as a mechanical power and operation of the spirit, an extraordinary powerful and blind spirit, and that they were out of their wits for the time.

By the way I cannot but observe, what a strange idea our author would give the world of the apostle Paul; for whom yet he frequently pretends a high veneration both in his former book, and in this. That apostle begins his epistle to the Corinthians, with declaring, that he thanked God continually on their behalf, for the grace of God which was given them by Jesus Christ: that in every thing they were enriched by him in all utterance, and in all knowledge, so that they came behind in no gift. And that thereby the testimony of Christ was confirmed in them, 1 Cor. i. 4—7. And throughout the whole xiith chapter of this epistle, he reckons up a diversity of extraordinary gifts that were poured forth in that age, in a wonderful variety upon the professors of Christianity; all which he ascribes to the divine Spirit, and to the special operation of God himself, who had appointed them all for the good of his church; and that he divided these gifts to every man severally according to his will. And among these gifts he reckons that of tongues, and the interpretation of tongues. Whereas it seems these gifts of the Spirit, of which the apostle speaks in such high terms, and upon which he so often lays a great stress, as yielding an illustrious attestation to Christianity, were only frantic fits of enthusiasm, wholly owing to the strength of imagination, and certain mechanical operations. So that when the apostle urges them, chap. xiv. 1, to desire spiritual gifts, it was only to desire unaccountable fits and motions of enthusiasm. And when he thanks God that he spoke with tongues more than they all, v. 18, it must be understood, as signifying that he excelled them all in these frantic fits; and had a greater faculty than any of them had of working himself into those raptures and ecstasies, and thereby losing his reason, and uttering words without sense, or coherence. Such is the idea our author gives of that great apostle of the Gentiles, who by his account must have been one of the wildest enthusiasts that ever lived, and so mad, that he took those fits of frenzy for extraordinary operations of the divine

Spirit. And this is he whom this same writer at other times represents, as the great free-thinker of his age, the bold and brave defender of reason against authority.*

I think all that have ever carefully read that apostle's writings, must allow that he had his reason and senses; and if so, he must be acknowledged to be a competent judge of the matter of fact, that is, that he himself had, and that there were several persons in the church of Corinth that had the gift of discoursing in languages which they had never learned. Whether our author supposes this to be a permanent habit, or only an occasional power of doing it when the *afflatus* was upon them, it is impossible to account for it in a natural way, or by any strength of imagination, or powers of mechanism. If it was done at all, it must have been by a supernatural power. They must have been inspired by some spirit besides and above their own. And it can hardly be supposed that an evil spirit, supposing it in his power, would have taken such pains to give attestation to Christianity, the manifest design and tendency of which was to destroy the heathenish superstition and idolatry, to reclaim men from vice and wickedness, and to engage them by the most powerful motives to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world.

Indeed if this gift of tongues were no more than a knack of uttering a few words of senseless gibberish, that did not properly belong to any language, there would not be much in it. And this seems to be the representation the author gives of it. And what is very odd, he would fain bring in the apostle Paul for a voucher; who, he tells us, speaks of this gift, not as a speaking with different tongues, but as an 'uttering different sounds and voices, and compares it to muttering, grumbling, piping, harping, and trumpeting, rather than talking in any articulate language.' I leave it to the reader to judge of the candour and sincerity of this writer, who can make such a representation as this of the apostle's sense; as if he supposed that those that had this gift did not really speak any language at all, but only made a senseless noise, which it was impossible for themselves or any other person to understand. And so when he blesses God in the passage already cited, that he could 'speak with tongues more than they all,' the meaning is, that he thanked God that he could 'mutter, grumble, and pipe, and speak unintelligible gibberish,' and make a confused inarticulate noise more excellently than any of them.

But this is all gross misrepresentation and abuse. It is extremely evident to any one that impartially reads that chapter, that the apostle all along supposes the gift of tongues to be a real extraordinary gift or power of speaking in different languages; that the languages spoken by the persons that exercised that extraordinary gift were intelligible to such as were acquainted with those languages; and that what they said was in itself good and excellent; but what he blames some among the Corinthians for is an unsea-

* Mor. Phil. vol. i. p. 71.

sonable ostentation of that gift, by using it in the public assemblies before persons that had not the knowledge of those languages, and therefore could not be profited by what was spoken. This he illustrates and confirms by many good reasons. He observes, that even with respect to the sounds of inanimate things, such as pipe, harp, trumpet, they can be of no use, except people can distinguish the tune or sound; much more in languages or articulate sounds, which are properly designed for communicating persons' thoughts and sentiments to one another, care should be taken that the words should be such, that those to whom they are spoken may understand their meaning, which they cannot be, if they be uttered in a language that those that hear it are strangers to. 'There are,' says he, 'so many kinds of voices, i. e. of languages in the world, and none of them is without signification.' They are all significant to those that are acquainted with those languages; but to others they appear barbarous. If 'I know not the meaning of the voice, I shall be unto him that speaketh a barbarian, and he that speaketh shall be a barbarian unto me,' vers. 10, 11. This is evidently the course of the apostle's reasoning. And then speaking of such as 'blessed and gave thanks to God in a strange tongue;' he urges, that he that 'occupied the room of the unlearned could not reasonably say amen to it;' and adds, 'thou verily givest thanks well,' *καλως*, excellently, 'but the other, i. e. the unlearned, that doth not understand it, is not edified,' vers. 16, 17. He shows, ver. 22, that those tongues 'were for a sign, not to them that believed, but to them that believed not.' Those that were already established in the Christian faith did not need this sign to convince them, and therefore there was no need of the exercise of this gift in their ordinary stated assemblies, where the faithful met together for their mutual edification and instruction. They were properly intended for a 'sign to unbelievers,' to those that were yet strangers to the Christian faith, that when they saw such extraordinary gifts poured forth upon the professors of Christianity, they might be convinced of its divine original. But though the right use of that gift of tongues might be of signal advantage to Christianity, and tend to the conviction of unbelievers; yet, if not used prudently and in an orderly manner, it might create confusion in their assemblies; and this would expose them to their adversaries, who, if they should come into their assemblies, and hear several of them talking in strange languages which they knew not the meaning of, might be ready to say they were mad, ver. 23. He therefore gives directions that not above two or three should speak in the church in a strange language, and that by course, and that one should interpret what was said. But if there was no interpreter, he that was for speaking in the strange tongue was to keep silence in the church, vers. 27, 28. This is the sum of what the apostle saith on the subject; by which we may see how different it is from the representation this writer is pleased to give us of it.

As to his pretence, that those that had this extraordinary gift of tongues did not understand what they themselves said, and that

they had no reason or understanding left of their own, whilst they were exercising that gift; this appears to be false, from the account the apostle gives of this matter; for he expressly saith, ver. 4, 'That he that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself; but he that prophesieth edifieth the church:' where it is evident that he puts this difference between speaking in a public assembly in a strange tongue, and prophesying, or giving public exhortations and instructions, in a language known to the hearers; that in the former case a man only edified himself, because he himself only understood what he said; but did not edify others, because others did not understand him; whereas, in the latter case, he edified others as well as himself. And therefore he saith, ver. 14, 'If I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful,' i. e. bringeth forth no fruit, and is of no advantage to others. He therefore declares, 'I will pray with the spirit, and will pray with the understanding also;' that is, I will so pray with the spirit, that my meaning may be understood by others. And accordingly he adds, ver. 19, 'In the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue.' And what he means by speaking 'with his understanding' he explains in the words immediately following, 'that I might teach others also.' And for this reason he gives it as a rule that he that had the gift of tongues should 'keep silence in the church' if there were none to interpret. 'And,' says he, 'let him speak to himself and to God,' i. e. let him address himself to God silently in acts of devotion for his own edification; where he again supposes that he had the exercise of his reason, and very well understood what he himself was to say, though, as others could not understand it, it was better for him to keep silence in the church, and revolve it secretly in his own mind.

But our author insinuates, that if a man understood the language himself, he might interpret it; whereas the apostle mentions the gift of speaking and of interpreting tongues as two different gifts. Upon which this writer makes this reflection, that 'one man was to speak in a language which he did not understand, and could not interpret; and another was to interpret a language which he could not speak.' It is probable he thinks this a very smart observation. But the former part of it I have already shown to be false. For the apostle here plainly supposes that those that had the gift of tongues did themselves understand what they spake. And it is as plain that those that interpreted what was spoken did understand what they interpreted. But it is very conceivable on the one hand, that a man may speak a foreign language very well, and yet not be happy in rendering it readily and properly into the vulgar tongue. And, on the other hand, a man may not be able to speak a foreign language readily and fluently, and yet may understand it so as to be able to give the sense of it readily and happily in his own. These are really different, and the difference between them is easily conceivable in a natural way. And it is as conceivable, supposing these gifts to be communicated in an extraordinary and supernatural

way, that God might so order it, that some persons might have the gift of speaking readily and fluently in a language which they never learned, and yet not be able readily and immediately to interpret and explain it to advantage in the vulgar tongue. And on the other hand, other persons that had not the gift of speaking so readily in those strange languages, might yet have a happy gift communicated to them of readily interpreting, in apt and proper expressions, the sense of what was thus spoken. These two gifts were indeed frequently found in the same persons, as is evident from ver. 5, 'For greater,' i. e. more useful to the church, 'is he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues, except he interpret, that the church may receive edifying.' Where it is plainly implied, that the same persons that spoke with tongues did sometimes at least also interpret. And therefore he exhorts, ver. 13, 'Let him that speaketh in an unknown tongue pray that he may interpret;' that is, let him pray to God to give him also the gift of aptly and readily interpreting what he spoke in the vulgar tongue, that the other might be rendered more useful; which manifestly supposes that these gifts often met together in the same persons; though it is plain they did not always go together, but were distributed to different persons, see chap. xii. 10, 30, xiv. 28. And there might be wise reasons for this, that might render it proper that those gifts should be sometimes separated, though we do not well know those reasons at this distance, because we are not well acquainted with the circumstances of the case. It is evident, from the account the apostle Paul gives us in the xiith chapter of the Epistle to the Corinthians, that it pleased God in that first age to distribute those extraordinary gifts with great variety, 'giving to every man severally according to his will.' And it might be so ordered to prevent their being too much elated on the account of those extraordinary gifts, which, as human nature is constituted, even good men themselves might be in danger of; and to make them more deeply sensible of their continual dependence upon God, who alone made them to differ from one another; and that they might in their several ways be useful and necessary to each other, and to the church; and so their mutual harmony might be strengthened. The apostle illustrates this with regard to this very case of different spiritual gifts, communicated to different persons, by an elegant similitude, drawn from the different uses and functions of the members of the body, see 1 Cor. xii. 14—31.

Thus I have gone through what this writer offers with regard to the gift of tongues; for as to his invective against 'the lying monks of the fourth century,' as he calls them, for pretending to give an account of the apostle's propagating Christianity as far as India, &c. by the help of the gift of tongues, we need not trouble ourselves much about it. Though we have no authentic account of the apostles' travels or preaching, yet it cannot reasonably be doubted, that they did take pains to propagate Christianity in distant countries. Christ's commission to them was express 'to teach all nations, and to go through all the world, and preach the gospel to

every creature ;' and it can scarce be thought, that they who had so profound a veneration for our Lord Jesus, would entirely neglect the commission he gave them. It does not appear that 'all the apostles of the circumcision kept together in and about Jerusalem, as he pretends, during all St. Paul's travels.' There is no proof that they were all of them together there at any one time when St. Paul came thither, not even at the council at Jerusalem. Or if they were, it no more proves that they were there continually, than St. Paul's being there at those times proves that he was always there. The only apostle that there is any reason to think resided constantly at Jerusalem is St. James, who alone is mentioned at St. Paul's being the last time at Jerusalem, Acts xxi. 18 ; and Luke's silence about the travels and labours of the other apostles, which this author urges, is no proof at all ; since he did not intend to write down the Acts of all the apostles, but chiefly of St. Paul, whose companion he was ; and after his conversion he takes not much notice of any other. We find from Gal. ii. 11, that St. Peter was at Antioch, and from his own epistle, that he was at Babylon ; whether that be to be understood of Babylon properly so called, or of Rome, as some suppose ; yet St. Luke takes not the least notice of either of these ; so that no argument can be drawn merely from his silence. As to what he farther urges, 'that it is not to be supposed that these men, who were rigidly strict to the law, should thus disperse themselves among the heathen nations, where they could neither eat nor drink with any body ;' he can neither prove that the apostles were so rigidly strict to the law as he supposes, the contrary to which has been shown ; nor if he could, would it prove, that they would not travel among the heathen nations for their conversion. Since it is an undeniable fact, that those Jews who were most strict in the observance of the law, did yet go among the heathen to proselyte them, and did actually, from time to time, turn many of them from their idolatry. So that this writer might have spared his reflections here, except he could have brought some better arguments to support them. That Christianity made a vast progress, even in the apostolic age, is certain, not only from several passages in Scripture,* as well as in Christian writers, much elder than the fourth century,† but from the testimony of heathen writers themselves, particularly‡ Tacitus with regard to the apostolic age, and of Pliny for that immediately following. And considering that

* See Rom. xv. 19, Col. v. 6, 23, ii. 1, 1 Peter i. 1, v. 13.

† I shall mention particularly that of Justin Martyr, who flourished in a little more than a hundred years after the death of our Saviour. In his dialogue with Trypho, upon occasion of that text in Malachi, chap. i. after having observed, that though the Jews were much dispersed, yet there were some nations among whom none of them ever yet dwelt ; he adds, οὐδὲ ἐν γὰρ ὅλῳ ἐστὶ τὸ γένος ἀνθρώπων εἴτε βαρβάρων εἴτε ἑλλήνων, &c. 'There is no nation of men, whether barbarians or Greeks, or by whatever name they are called, &c. among whom prayers and thanksgivings are not offered to the Father and Maker of all things, through the name of a crucified Jesus.' Allowing these expressions to be a little hyperbolic, they show that Christianity had then made a very wide progress in different parts of the world.

‡ Tacit. Annal. lib. 15. Plin. Epist. lih. 10. Epist. 97, ad Trajan.

it had no worldly advantages to attend it, that it had the artifices and influence of the priests, the bigotry and superstition of the vulgar, the inveterate prejudices both of the Jews and Gentiles, and the vicious appetites and passions of men engaged against it; and considering the weakness and meanness of the instruments by whom it was first propagated, and the persecutions to which the professors of it were exposed, it is impossible to account for the amazing progress it made, without supposing the truth and evidence of those facts on which it is founded, and especially of the extraordinary gifts poured forth in the apostolic age; among which that of tongues was very remarkable, and particularly fitted to promote the spreading of Christianity in different nations. And if all these apostolical gifts had been no more than frantic fits of enthusiasm, and the primitive Christians were such a parcel of madmen as this writer thinks fit to represent them, I am persuaded that Christianity and its professors would soon have sunk into the same obscurity with the French prophets, to whom he is pleased to compare them. I had observed, that among other gifts of the apostolical age, one was the gift of wisdom and knowledge, whereby they had their minds extraordinarily enlightened in the knowledge of spiritual and divine things, and that it cannot be pretended that this was one of those gifts that were capable of being abused to propagate error and falsehood; 'since it is a contradiction to suppose, that any person should, by the exercise of this gift of divine wisdom and knowledge, that is, by the very actual exercise of the knowledge of truth, and by declaring and imparting to others the knowledge he himself had of the truth, promote and propagate false doctrine and error.' Our author makes himself very merry with this, and thinks it is not 'possible for any man to read it and forbear laughing.' But the ridicule turns upon himself. The supposition he had made in his former book, concerning the extraordinary gifts in the apostolic age was this, 'that those that were endued with those gifts might make either a good or bad use of them, as much as of any natural faculties or talents;' where he evidently runs a parallel between natural faculties and talents and the apostolical gifts, and supposes them to be alike in this, that they were equally capable of being applied to good or ill purposes. This will easily be allowed with regard to natural faculties and talents. For when a man uses those talents, e. g. his judgment, fancy, sagacity, eloquence, to promote error and vice, he as really uses his faculties and talents, as if he employed them in the cause of truth and virtue, only he makes a wrong or bad use of them. But the case is different with regard to some of the apostolical gifts. They were not like natural faculties, which may be really used and exercised, and in that use and exercise be applied to promote error as well as truth; but they were of such a nature, as if really used and exercised at all, could only serve the cause of truth. Of this kind I reckoned the gift of divine wisdom and knowledge, which included the illuminating of their minds with the actual knowledge of divine truth. Now it is manifest, that whenever this gift was really exercised, it could only serve

the cause of truth. Knowledge may be used to promote error, but the knowledge of truth cannot. And the contrary supposition is absurd and self-contradictory.

P. 235, he allows that the power of working miracles was not a permanent abiding habit to be exercised at any time, and at mere will and pleasure; that it was not constant, but occasional; yet he asserts, that 'whenever they had this power and could exercise it, as they were free agents in it, they might make a good or bad use of it, as much as of any natural power they had, and in the exercise of which they were free,' p. 236. But if the apostles did not work miracles by their own power, but by the immediate impulse and agency of the Divine Spirit, and could never perform those miracles at any time but when he thought fit to enable them to do them; it is absurd to the last degree to suppose that they could exercise that power for such purposes as they themselves pleased, contrary to the mind of the Spirit by whom they were at that time enabled to exercise it. If therefore they should have attempted at any time to work such miracles in confirmation of falsehood, they must have immediately failed in the attempt; except we suppose the Spirit himself, by whose influence these miracles were wrought, and on whose will it depended when they should work them, intended to confirm falsehood, and lent his power for that purpose. To suppose which of a good Spirit, which is the present supposition, is a manifest inconsistency. As to his insinuation, p. 235, as if the efficacy of the miracles depended on the 'faith of healing,' which he thinks 'madmen and lunatics might have in a higher degree than others, as they had the greatest force of imagination;' I would know when the dead were raised, as Eutychus was by the apostle Paul, and Dorcas by St. Peter, whether the faith and imagination of these dead persons did also co-operate to their being raised again? Or, did the faith of the impotent man that had been lame from his mother's womb, i. e. his belief that the apostles would give him money, for this was all he expected from them; did this imagination of his enable them in an instant, by a word speaking, to restore him to the perfect use of his limbs? Acts iii. 4—8. But I shall say no more of this here, having taken notice of it before; and besides, our author is pleased afterwards to own, p. 236, that 'the cure of a fever, or any common distemper, by a touch or word of command, must be allowed to be very extraordinary and miraculous.'

CHAPTER XI.

The Author's attempt to vindicate what he had said concerning the Apostle's preaching different Gospels, shown to be vain and insufficient. His censures on the Apocalypse considered. The doctrine of Christ's satisfaction farther vindicated against his exceptions. His concluding attempt to prove that there are plain marks of imposture in the law of Moses, and particularly that it was calculated to advance the carnal worldly interest of the politician, and that it gave a large indulgence to personal intemperance, and the lusts of uncleanness. The 'strange representations he makes of the law of jealousy. The injustice of his reflections upon it shown. The Conclusion.

THIS writer had, in his former book, made a mighty noise about the different gospels preached by the apostles. He had given a formal account of the Jewish gospel, which he pretends was taught by all the apostles but St. Paul. This pretended Jewish gospel was shown to be entirely his own fiction.* It highly concerned him, therefore, since he had laid so great a stress upon it, to vindicate what he had offered on this head, if he had been able to do it. And he assures us, in the contents of his ninth section, which I am now going to consider, that he has proved that there was a real separation between Peter and Paul, 'occasioned by the different gospels they preached.' One would, therefore, have expected here some vindication of his Jewish gospels, but nothing of this appears. He cries out, as his custom is, against systems and school divinity, which to be sure is very pertinent to the point in debate. And then he answers all that I had said by asking a few questions, which he supposes must 'take me three or four volumes more to answer.' One of them relates to the long and warm debates in the Jerusalem council; but how this will prove a difference among the apostles is hard to see; since it appears that there was an entire harmony among them, and that they all concurred in condemning the false Judaizing teachers, as subverting men's souls, and in absolving the Gentiles from the observation of the law of Moses. He next mentions Paul's withstanding Peter to the face, and 'charging him with prevarication and inconsistency.' But this doth not prove that they preached different gospels. On the contrary, it appears evidently, from that very passage, that St. Peter did not believe the absolute obligation of the ceremonial law more than St. Paul; that the difference between them was not about any point of doctrine; but because Peter, for fear of giving offence to some of the Jews that came from Jerusalem, declined eating openly with the Gentiles as he had done before; for this he was blamed by St. Paul. And this apostle, in what he saith to him on that occasion, proceeds upon it as an uncontested truth, in which

* See Div. Author, pp. 231—232.

he and St. Peter were agreed; that we are justified, 'not by the works of the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ,' Gal. ii. 15, 16. Our author's next question supposes, that James 'sent down his Jewish zealots to Antioch, after the decree of the council, to insist upon circumcision and obedience to the whole law. But this cannot reasonably be supposed, since we find that James himself was one of the principal of those that in the council of Jerusalem argued for exempting the Gentiles from those things, and joined in branding those as troublers of the churches, and subverters of men's souls, that insisted upon it. And afterwards we find him representing it as a fixed point, agreed and concluded upon, that the 'Gentiles should observe no such things,' Acts xxi. 25. Our author's following questions go upon these suppositions: 'that Peter and Paul broke upon this, and a schism in the church happened upon it during the whole apostolical age;' the absolute falsehood of which was clearly and fully shown in my former book, to which he has not been able to make the least reply.* That St. Paul, 'long after this, in his Epistle to the Galatians, mentions Peter personally, and by name, five or six times, as the head and ringleader of those Judaizers; and that he openly and plainly charges the Judaizing apostles and teachers,' by which this writer means all the apostles of our Lord, except St. Paul himself, 'as false apostles and teachers, and for usurping the ministry, which had been wholly left to him. All this is purely fiction, since, on the contrary, it is evident from the account St. Paul himself gives, that there was an entire harmony and agreement between him and the other apostles, of whom St. Peter was one of the chief. That they approved his doctrine, and owned his divine mission; and he plainly distinguishes between the apostles, and those whom he calls 'false brethren,' who came in 'privily to spy out their liberty,' Gal. ii. 2—10. Thus I have gone through the author's questions, which, with the invectives he is pleased here to bestow very plentifully upon me, and which it is neither worth my while nor the reader's to take the least notice of, is all that he offers to show that the apostles preached different gospels; and must pass for a full answer to the clear and direct proofs I have brought to the contrary.

He goes on, p. 240, &c., to say something again about the Jerusalem council, and repeats what he had said in his former book, 'that the Jerusalem council enjoined the law of proselytism upon the heathen Gentile converts; and this law of proselytism he explains to be a total absolute separation from the rest of the world, with regard to eating, drinking, cohabitation, intermarriages,' &c. He should have told us from what memoirs he comes to know that the Jerusalem councils enjoined this upon the Gentile converts. For it is certain there is no mention of any such injunction in the account given us of that council, in the Acts of the Apostles, nor of the difference and schism between them and St.

* See Div. Author, pp. 236, 248, 249.

Paul, which he assures us this was the occasion of. But there is one part of this pretended decree, which, if it had been made in that council, that apostle certainly would not have been against, and that is, the forbidding intermarriages between the Christians and the idolatrous Gentiles. For it is evident from what he saith, 2 Cor. vi. 14—16, that he very much disapproved and condemned those marriages between believers and unbelievers.

Pp. 241, 242, he feigns a state of the case at that council, that is neither true in fact, nor, if it were, would be any thing to the purpose at all. He represents it as if the occasion of the council was, that the Judaizing teachers, who urged circumcision and the observation of the law upon the Gentiles, were willing that those among the Gentiles that had been 'proselytes of the gate,' at the time of their conversion to Christianity, should be admitted into the church and to all its privileges equally with the Jews, without being circumcised. But that they would not admit those that had been converted to Christianity, from being idolatrous Gentiles, to come into the church without circumcision. But this is entirely his own imagination. Those Judaizing teachers that came to Antioch laid it down as an universal rule concerning all the Gentile converts, 'that except they were circumcised after the manner of Moses, they could not be saved.' This they urged upon the brethren at Antioch, a church that had been originally founded, not by St. Paul, but by some that came from Jerusalem; and which seems to have been chiefly gathered out of such as had been 'proselytes of the gate;' see Acts xi. 20, 21, 22, 25; though no doubt there were also many among them that had been idolatrous Gentiles at the time of their conversion. Accordingly, the question before the council proceeded concerning all the Gentile converts without distinction. And Peter, in his arguments upon it, puts them in mind that God had chosen him long before, 'that the Gentiles should hear by his mouth the word of the gospel, and believe, and put no difference between them and the Jews,' Acts xv. 7, 8, 9, where he calls Cornelius and those that were with him, though they were proselytes of the gate, and not idolaters, 'Gentiles;' and St. James, speaking of the same thing, calls them 'Gentiles too,' v. 14. Indeed all the proselytes of the gate had been once idolatrous Gentiles, and after being turned from their idolatry were still called Gentiles; and were not taken at all into the peculium of the Jews, nor regarded as belonging to their body, without being circumcised. And therefore the Judaizing teachers were not for having them, or any other from among the Gentiles to be taken into the Christian church without being circumcised. They were for having the observation of the law urged as necessary upon all the Gentile converts without exception. And the council was for having all the Gentile converts, without distinction, exempted from it. In this all the apostles and elders agreed, and passed a severe censure upon those false teachers that had urged the necessity of circumcision; so that what was done at that council, instead of proving that there were differences among the

apostles, or between the other apostles and St. Paul, which is what the author brings it for, furnishes a manifest proof that there was an entire harmony among them. Nor has this writer been able to produce any thing to the contrary; but after repeating what he had said before, and what has already been considered, concerning St. Paul's blaming Peter at Antioch, flies into some wild talk concerning Peter's infallibility, when he denied his master, &c.; see pp. 243, 244. And then leaves his argument concerning the difference between the apostles and the different gospels they preached to shift for itself, as well as it can.

He next proceeds to vindicate what he had said with regard to the apocalypse, and represents me as undertaking to prove that it is not the Christian Revelation; as if I denied it to be a Sacred Book of the New Testament; because I would not allow it to be the whole of the Christian Revelation, as he had absurdly insinuated, because it has the words, 'Revelation of Jesus Christ,' in the title.

What he offers here is so strangely loose, that the difficulty lies, not in confuting it, but in reducing it to any thing that can look like argument. He had asserted that that book teaches the mediatorial worship of saints and angels, and prayers for the dead: that the Christian Jews soon fell into gross idolatry, and set up a great number of mediators and intercessors with God instead of one. And this he pretended to prove from the apocalypse; and the proof he brought was, because the twenty-four elders, whom he supposed to be the 'principal angels,' are represented as having 'golden censors in their hands full of incense, which is the prayers of the saints.' But it was shown that those elders were not to be understood of the angels, nor of departed saints; but that it was designed as a figurative representation of the state of the church on earth, and the prayers offered up to God there. And it is evident to any one that hath considered that book, that heaven, and the temple, and altar there, often signify in this prophecy, the visible Christian church on earth, and the worship there performed. Our author hath nothing to offer against this; but to fly out against the prophetic language and style, as something that cannot be made common sense of. But though the style be figurative, and he that would take all the expressions of that book literally, would show himself as absurd as this writer has done; yet it doth not follow but that by a careful comparing one thing with another, and considering the genius of the prophetic style, we may come to know the design of those expressions. And many learned men, every way superior to this writer, and much better judges of good sense than he can reasonably pretend to be, have very profitably employed their pains this way, and found not only a good, but a sublime and useful sense. And notwithstanding the obscurities of this book, there have been many noble discoveries made from it, that affords an illustrious proof of the extent of the divine foreknowledge, and of the truth and reality of prophecy.

This writer makes himself merry with my having said, that the

‘word angel admits of so many senses in that book, that no argument can be drawn from it.’* The plain design of which was, that no argument can be drawn merely from that word, as if whenever it occurs in that book, it is to be understood literally of angels properly so called, since it is evident, that this expression is often used, where angels, properly so called, are not intended to be represented by it, of which I gave some instances. But though that word is there taken in very different senses, yet for the most part, by a careful consideration of the circumstances of the context where it is used, we may come to know the meaning of it; and if in some particular passages we cannot be certain as to the precise meaning of it, it will only follow, that no argument can be drawn from it, as used in those passages; which may be safely allowed, since there are many passages in that book, that we do not precisely know the meaning of; and yet this doth not hinder, but that there are other passages plain enough, and of special use. One of which I take to be that of the angel forbidding John to worship him, though it could only be an inferior worship that John intended. And it is an odd thing for this writer to attempt to prove the worship of angels from that book, in which it is as clearly forbidden as in any one passage in the whole Scripture.

As to prayers for the dead, he pretends I have admitted of it so far as he had urged it from the authority of the apocalypse. I had shown that what this author would put upon us as a proof of prayers for the dead, has nothing in it but what is very agreeable to reason, and what no understanding Protestant ever denied. And now he does not so much as undertake to show the absurdity of it; but talks of the primitive Christians in the first ages, as supposing the souls of the departed saints, to be ‘hovering about their tombs and sepulchres,’ in which he abuses them as well as St. John; since though they did not suppose them to be admitted into the full glory of heaven, till the resurrection, yet they supposed them to be in a paradise, a state of rest and peace.

He had asserted, that the author of this book confines salvation to the Jews only, and that according to him, not one Gentile was to be saved. *Mor. Phil.* vol. i. p. 372. The contrary to this was plainly proved by express passages out of the book itself, to which our author has nothing to answer; but according to his laudable custom, still persists in affirming what he had said before. He declares that the whole Jewish nation excluded even the devout Gentiles, or proselytes of the gate, from any possibility of salvation, till they became proselytes of righteousness, and conformed to the whole law; and that the Christian Jews made the entrance still narrower, and excluded all from hope of salvation, who did believe Jesus to be the true national prophetic Messiah; that is, ‘a mighty conquering prince of the house of David, who was to subdue all other nations under them.’ And so he goes on after his way, to assert that this was the idea under which the prophets represented the Messiah, see pp. 250, 251, which he had said several times before, and which has been already considered.

* See *Divine Authority*, pp. 252, 253.

He concludes this section with assuring his reader, that by my own acknowledgment the prophetic style and language are unintelligible; and then urges, that it is impossible to convince the Jews that they mistook the prophets; whereas it is both certain that great numbers of the Jews, at the first promulgation of the gospel, were convinced by those prophecies; and that many of the Jews since have been convinced by them, of some of which Mr. Chapman has given him a particular account. As to what he adds, that it is impossible for me, by all my shifts and evasions, to convince him that he has mistaken the prophets, p. 254, I will readily agree, that it is impossible to make him own that he is convinced, or that he has ever been in the wrong, in any one thing he has advanced; but I am satisfied that it is very easy to convince the rest of the world of this.

In his last section, he proposes to consider what I had offered concerning the satisfaction of Christ. He saith this is 'a turning point, and almost the hinge of the whole controversy, and that therefore he will more particularly consider all that I had offered about it.' One would expect after this, that he should have entered on a distinct examination of the argument, and yet he passes it over without so much as taking off the force of anything I had offered in answer to his objections.

He again represents it as a 'perfect inversion of all order and justice, that the innocent should suffer for the guilty; that merit and demerit are incommunicable adjuncts, and not transferrable from one person to another; that it is impossible to urge the doctrine of Christ's satisfaction in any way whatsoever, so as not to have a mischievous effect, as not encouraging presumption, quieting men in their sins, and bearing off repentance.' These things he had urged more largely and strongly before; and they have been particularly considered; and as he has not vouchsafed to take the least notice of what was offered on these heads, I shall refer the reader to my former answer.

He still insists upon it, that he had fully proved, that 'there were no vicarious sacrifices under the law of Moses; and that a man's offering a sacrifice did not exempt him from any other mulct, fine, or penalty in law.' And he is the more sure of this, because I have not been able to give any instance to the contrary. And yet I showed, that in cases where sacrifices were appointed to be offered, a man was always exempted from any fine, mulct, or penalty. That the sacrifice under that constitution was always supposed to avert the penalty, which would otherwise have been due. But he urges, that sacrifices were a part of legal obedience, and therefore they could not possibly typify and represent any real propitiation or sacrifice for sin, p. 261. That 'what was called making the atonement by the priest's sprinkling the blood, could signify nothing but declaring the atonement, or giving this open, public, and legal notification of it, that the person's sacrifice was accepted, and that by this personal act of obedience to the law, he stood acquitted in law. It was in the nature of a legal discharge,

that the law by such an offering or personal act was satisfied to that time.' p. 263. It will easily be acknowledged, that the offering the sacrifice, in cases where sacrifices were appointed by the law to be offered, was an act of obedience to the law; and that upon offering the sacrifice in such cases in the proper manner, the person was acquitted and discharged in law from the guilt he was supposed to have contracted, and the law was satisfied. But does this prove, that therefore there was no atonement supposed to be made by those sacrifices? It proves the very contrary. And it is a strange way of reasoning, that because the law required a sacrifice to be offered as an atonement, in order to the obtaining legal remission, and upon offering the sacrifice, a man did obtain legal forgiveness; therefore the sacrifice made no legal atonement, or was not supposed to make an atonement in law?

As to what he adds, p. 264, that "in like manner, Jesus Christ, by his obedience to death, and shedding his blood upon the cross, gave a public authentic declaration, or notification, of the acceptableness of such personal obedience, as the true righteousness that God would accept or reward," I do not see how Christ's suffering and dying could be said to be a notification of the acceptableness of his obedience and death; it was his resurrection and glorification that was the proper notification of this; and therefore if his death or shedding his blood, is represented as a propitiation, on no other account than that it publicly notified the acceptableness of his obedience, his resurrection may be more justly called a propitiation or atonement, which yet it never is in Scripture.

But he urges, p. 260, that 'there is not one word in Scripture of Christ's dying to reconcile God to us, or to dispose him to be merciful to penitent sinners;' nor do those systematical divines, over whom he triumphs on all occasions, suppose that Christ died to dispose God to be merciful to us; but it was because he was disposed to be merciful to us, that he sent his son Jesus Christ to die, and give himself a sacrifice for our sins. He adds, that there is not one word in Scripture of Christ's dying to procure merit or pardon upon our repentance, or to manifest and display the justice and righteousness of God, and his hatred of sin. But we are told in Scripture, that Christ's blood was shed for the remission of sins; that in him we have redemption through his blood, even the remission of sins; that his blood cleanseth from all sin; that God hath set him forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness in the remission of sins, that God might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus; that God hath made him to be sin, or a sin-offering for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him; that is, that we might be justified through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ, as it is elsewhere expressed: that Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us. And many other passages might be produced to the same purpose. And what sense can be made of these and such like expressions upon our author's scheme, I cannot see.

But the most formidable objection is still behind. He has a good deal of talk, pp. 259, 260, to show how much the world must be 'obliged to the ignorant and wicked Jews upon the mediatorial scheme; and how hard it is to censure or condemn them for doing a thing, that was necessary to be done for the salvation of mankind; and which God had before ordained and appointed to be done.' But this sagacious writer does not reflect, that if this way of talking were just, it would bear as hard upon the scheme he pretends to espouse, as upon that which he thinks fit to oppose. He himself says, that it is clear and intelligible enough, how a whole nation, or the whole world, may derive vast advantages from the sufferings and hardships of a particular person,' p. 259. And will he say, that upon such a supposition, the world would be obliged for these vast advantages to them that inflicted those sufferings and hardships upon that person? He had in his former book mentioned several advantages, arising from the death of Christ; and particularly, that it was of great benefit, as he was a glorious martyr, that died to confirm the truth of his doctrine, and as he thereby exhibited an admirable and useful example. And must we thank the Jews, and own our great obligation to them for all this? This, it must be owned, is a very extraordinary way of talking. And so whenever God, in his infinite wisdom, overrules the wickedness of mankind, which he perfectly foresaw, but of which he is not the author and the cause, and brings the most eminent good out of it, the thanks must be given to the wicked actors, though they were prompted to what they did, merely by their own malice, rather than to that supreme wisdom and goodness, which, contrary to their intention, brought so much good out of that evil. But he asks, if Christ had not suffered from the Jews, must the whole world have been damned? This goes upon the modest supposition of God's prescience being disappointed, and then what would have been done next? I will not pretend to say what might have been done, or what method God, in his inexhaustible wisdom, might have fixed upon for dispensing his mercy towards sinful mankind: but as he has taken this way of doing it, I am satisfied that it is best, and most wisely and fitly ordered. And it does not prove that God did not take this method, because if he had not taken this method he would have fixed upon another. It does not prove, that Christ did not suffer and die to make atonement for our sins, because if he had not suffered and died, he had made no atonement for our sins by his sufferings and death: but such is our author's admirable reasoning. And at this rate it must be said, that Christ did not die to leave us an example, which yet this writer pretends to own he did, because if he had not died, he had not left us an example by his death. But I need say no more on this head of Christ's satisfaction, which was so largely considered in my former book, and which this writer here so slightly passes over.

He concludes this section and his book, so far as I am concerned in it, with a virulent invective against the law of Moses, which he

assures us has all the marks and characters of imposture, mentioned by Dean Prideaux in his Letter to the Deists, and applied by him to the religion of Mahomet. And first he affirms, pp. 265, 266, that 'the whole plan and contrivance of this polity was calculated and directed for the temporal carnal interests, wealth, and power of the politician, by securing the government for ever in his own tribe and family.'

As to Moses's own family, I think he gave the greatest proof of his disinterestedness, and how far he was from any worldly ambitious views; since, notwithstanding his vast authority and interest with the people, though he left two sons, he did not raise either of them or their children to any dignity at all, but left them to continue undistinguished among the common Levites, whose business was only to minister about the sanctuary, in inferior offices under the priests. And accordingly they and their descendants continued in obscurity, nor do we find they made any figure at all. It is true the priesthood was vested in the family of Aaron by that constitution, who was Moses's brother; but if Moses had been acted by a spirit of ambition, and a desire of advancing the power and grandeur of his family, as this writer represents it, was it not natural to expect that he should have in the first place taken care of his own immediate progeny? Or, if he had admitted Aaron and his family to a share of the priesthood, that he would not have excluded his own for ever from it, which yet we find he did? But Moses, in the constitutions he made, was only governed by the directions he received from God, and was 'faithful to Him that appointed him,' without any regard to his own private interests. As to what this writer so often insinuates, as if the government was vested in the tribe of Levi by the Mosaic constitution, this has been shown to be false. When Moses appointed judges, who were to discharge the office of magistrates among the people, both the inferior judges, who were to determine lesser matters, and the seventy elders, that were appointed for causes of a higher nature, in neither of these appointments was there any peculiar regard to the tribe of Levi; but they were chosen out of all the tribes. When he died, he did not leave the chief government either in his own or brother's family, or in his own tribe, but left it in the hands of Joshua, whom he appointed to succeed him, and in whom the supreme power was vested. Nor was there any direction in the law that the succeeding governors should be of the tribe of Levi; and, in fact, none of the judges were ever chosen out of that tribe, except Eli and Samuel. And as to their kings, all the direction Moses gives as to their choosing them is, that they should choose 'one from among their brethren,' without confining them to any particular tribe, Deut. xvii. 15. And, by the prophecy he mentions of dying Jacob, he seems plainly to fix the chief authority in the tribe of Judah, Gen. xlix. 8, 10. And, in fact we find, that when they came to have kings, they were not taken from among the priests, as it was in Egypt, where their kings were usually priests.*

* See Plutarch de Isid. et Osirid.

As to what he farther adds here, concerning the legal revenues of the priesthood, amounting to 'an annual rent, or a third part of the whole produce of the land; and that the tribe of Levi alone must have been almost double in wealth and power to all the rest of the tribes together, and able to maintain a war against them;' this depends upon the truth of his own calculations, the unfairness and absurdity of which hath been sufficiently shown.

The author's next observation, to prove the marks of imposture in the law of Moses is, because, by the constitution of that law, the tribe of Levi were to be dispersed through the whole country. But this is a proof of nothing but the strong prejudices he hath against the priests and Levites. For if the law was excellent, and fitted to make the people happy, and to direct them in the true worship of God, and the practice of universal righteousness, as it certainly was; and, if the proper business of the priests and Levites was to instruct the people in the knowledge of the law, as is evident from many passages,* then it was a very wise and good constitution, that the priests and Levites should be dispersed through the several tribes, for the instruction of the people. As to what he adds, p. 267, concerning the law for punishing idolatry with death, and concerning the worship of the local tutelar God of Israel, this hath been fully considered.

But he farther argues, p. 267, that the 'indulgence given under this economy to personal intemperance, especially the most predominant and prevailing lusts of the flesh, drunkenness and carnal concupiscence, or the excessive use of wine and women, is another strong and glaring mark of worldly carnal policy.' And he observes, p. 271, that as 'the priesthood must have been very burdensome and expensive to the nation, it was but reasonable and fit that they should be indulged in some carnal liberties and peculiar personal enjoyments, the better to reconcile them to and make them the more easy under such a divine economy.' Any one that was to judge of the Mosaic constitution by this writer's representation of it, would be apt to think, that in that law there was an allowance for intemperance and debauchery, in order to make the people easy under their other burdens. But I doubt not the reader is before now fully convinced how little stress is to be laid upon any thing he affirms, though with never so great confidence. As to drunkenness, he himself seems in this very book to acknowledge that Moses condemns it, and denounces the judgments of God against it; though he pretends he does this, not as a lawgiver but as a prophet and preacher of righteousness. And whereas he says, 'a man might be as drunk as he would, and as often, without incurring a legal punishment;' it is certain, that in the case of the rebellious son, brought by his parents before the magistrates, his being a glutton and a drunkard is particularly mentioned, as a reason of the severe punishment that was to be inflicted on him, Deut. xxi.

* See Lev. x. 11, Deut. xxxiii. 10, 2 Chron. xvii. 8, 9, xxx. 22, Neh. viii. 7, 9, Mal. ii. 4, 7.

20, 21. With regard to the encouragement he pretends was given in that economy to carnal concupiscence, he represents it as if a man were allowed by law to 'keep as many wives and concubines as he thought fit, and turn them off again at pleasure; to take fresh ones, and glut his lust with the greatest variety.' But this also is very unfairly represented. In the Mahometan law, indeed, it is expressly allowed to every man to have four wives, besides which they are allowed to lie with their maid-servants as often as they are pleased, see Alcor. chaps. iv. lxvi. And accordingly, ever since the time of Mahomet, it hath been an established law among them to keep as many women-slaves for their lust as they think fit to buy, and the children of the one are as legitimate as the children of the other. And this is not to be wondered at, since Mahomet himself was noted for lust and impurity, and forged revelations from God, expressly approving his adulteries, and allowing him to indulge his lusts without control, and to marry as many wives as he should think fit, and those even of his near relations, the daughters of his brother or the daughters of his sister, see Alcor. chap. xxxiii. But Moses was of a quite different character. He could never be charged with the least stain of impurity. Nor is there any encouragement given to it in his law, but much to the contrary. Great care is there taken to curb and restrain men's exorbitant lusts. Adultery is forbidden in the strongest manner, and under the severest penalties, Lev. xx. 10, Deut. xxii. 22—24. So are all rapes, Deut. xx. 25, 27. And where a person enticed a virgin that was not married, though he did not force her but prevailed with her to consent, he was obliged to marry her, if her father pleased; and if not, was to give her a dowry, Exod. xxii. 16, 17. All fornication is expressly forbidden in that law; whereas it was generally indulged and allowed in the laws of other countries. There was to be no 'whore of the daughters of Israel.' And the reason is given, 'lest the land should fall to whoredom, and become full of wickedness.' And, to show how odious this was in the sight of God, 'the hire of a harlot was expressly forbidden to be brought into the house of the Lord for any vow.' And it is declared, that 'this is an abomination unto the Lord,' see Lev. xix. 29, Deut. xxiii. 17, 18. So that the priests were not allowed to receive the money or offerings that were the price of whoredom. Nor was there any expedient in that constitution for a lewd woman's pretending to compensate for her wickedness by making a present of a part of her gains to the church. And how different was this from the heathen customs, among whom, in many places, whoredom and impurity made a part of the worship of their deities! There were women that prostituted themselves kept in the public temples, and the rewards of their impurity were offered to their gods.* Under the Mosaic constitution, no man was allowed to

* Sextus Empyricus informs us, that among many of the Egyptians it was ἐνκλήεις glorious for women to prostitute themselves, Pyr. Hyp. lib. iii. cap. 24. Strabo acquaints us, that at Corinth there was a temple that maintained more than a thousand

abuse his slaves to his lust, as in the Mahometan law. Even with regard to captives taken in war, they were not permitted to violate them. But if an Israelite fell in love with a beautiful captive, he was obliged to take her home and marry her, after having allowed her a proper space to bewail her father and mother, Deut. xxi. 10—15.

With regard to polygamy, some very learned persons have been of opinion that that passage, Lev. xviii. 18, is designed to prohibit it. And thus the Caraites understand it, a sect of Jews that are for keeping close to the letter of the law. But not to insist upon this, if it be not prohibited in the law of Moses, yet it is certain that there is nowhere any express allowance for any man to have more wives than one as there is in the law of Mahomet. Nor is this practice ever mentioned with the least approbation in that law; yea, there are several things that seem fairly to imply a disapprobation of it.* Moses, in the account he gives of the creation of Adam and Eve, and the original institution of marriage in paradise, leads them to conclude that one man was originally designed for one woman; that this was the primitive constitution in a state of innocence, and what God designed at man's first creation. And there are several excellent regulations in that law, to remedy the inconveniences of the contrary practice, which had then obtained, and as circumstances then stood, could scarce be entirely prevented. It is provided in that law, that if a man had more wives than one, he should be obliged to treat them equally with kindness and humanity, and not, out of a greater affection to one, to use the other ill, or to show a partial regard to the children of the one rather than to those of the other, see Exod. xxi. 9, 10, Deut. xxi. 15—17. The obliging him to provide for them all, with respect to their food, raiment, and duty of marriage, and not to diminish this with regard to the former wife upon his taking another, was designed to prevent the multiplying of their wives. And whereas a king might be supposed to have it more in his power than others to maintain a great number of wives, and might look upon them as a piece of grandeur and royalty, he is expressly commanded 'not to multiply wives to himself,' Deut. xvii. 17. The proposing these regulations cannot in reason be construed into an approbation of that practice, but rather fairly implies a disapprobation of it, and shows the disadvantages attending it.

With respect to divorces, the author represents, that according to that law, a 'man might turn off his wives at pleasure to take fresh ones, and so glut himself with the greatest variety; and might discharge her from him without giving a reason for it.' But this is

whores, *ιεροδούλους ἐταίρας*, 'whores consecrated to the service of the goddess,' Geogr. lib. viii. And he tells us, that at Comana, a city of Cappadocia, there were whores consecrated to the moon, whom they there worshipped, lib. xii. And Herodotus observes, concerning the Babylonians, that there were many women that sat at the gates of the temple, and prostituted themselves for hire, and that the money that was thus obtained was wont to be dedicated to sacred uses, Herod. lib. i. cap. 199.

* Concerning this, see Reflect. on Polyg. Dissert. iii. 4.

far from being a fair representation of the Mosaic law relating to that matter. The law relating to divorces is, Deut. xxiv. 1—4, 'When a man hath taken a wife and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her, then let him write her a bill of divorcement,' &c. Here it is evident that Moses does not allow a man to divorce his wife merely at pleasure. There ought to be a reason for it, and the reason here assigned is some matter of uncleanness. This the school of Sammai, a noted set of doctors among the Jews, understood of some weighty important cause. And some of the later Rabbies, particularly the famous Abarbanel, understood it of a light indecent behaviour that rendered her suspected of impurity. To which they add, as another reason for divorces, a difference and contrariety of temper, that was not likely to be cured, so that they hated each other's company, and lived in perpetual contention. What is expressed, ver. 1, by 'her not finding favour in his eyes,' is expressed in ver. 3, by his 'hating her.' In this case the man was permitted to give her a bill of divorcement. This law was designed to prevent worse consequences; and in many cases was really an advantage to the woman, who was hereby delivered from a domestic tyrant and a man that hated her, and left at liberty to marry another with whom she might live more happily. And if this author were to argue this point on the foot of the law of nature, he might probably find it no easy matter to answer Milton's books on that subject. Yet it is plain this law was not designed to encourage frequent divorces. It seems rather to have been intended to check and regulate them which probably had been in use before; for Moses refers to them before the giving of that law in Deut. xxiv. 1—4. See Lev. xxi. 14, xxii. 13, Numb. xxx. 9. By this law they were not to send them away but for some weighty cause, and that not without a bill of divorcement. And the formality necessary in this bill of divorcement gave time for consideration. But especially what is said, v. 4, is plainly designed to show a disapprobation of such divorces. For in order to discourage them it is ordered, that if the woman should marry again, and the latter husband should divorce her or die, 'her former husband which sent her away may not take her again to be his wife, after that she is defiled; for that is abomination before the Lord, and thou shalt not cause the land to sin.' Where it is supposed, that though she was allowed after her divorcement 'to go and be another man's wife,' because otherwise the divorcement would have been a much greater hardship and grievance to the divorced woman, yet she was looked upon as defiled to her first husband by the second marriage. And as the man that had first divorced her was the cause of it, he was never to marry her again; and let him repent ever so much of the usage he had given her, and though his affection should return to her, or it might otherwise be of great advantage to him to take her again, it was never permitted upon any pretence whatsoever. And this had a great tendency to prevent rash divorces for sudden

quarrels or slight causes,* and tended to make them consider well before they did it. It is probable that for a long time there were few instances of divorces among the people of Israel. Mr. Selden observes, *Ux. Hebr. lib. iii. cap. 19*, that there is no instance of that kind recorded, nor any mention made of divorces at all, from the days of Moses till the time of Isaiah, who alludes to it, chap. l. 1, and so does Jeremiah, chap. iii. 1—6. And by the way I would observe, that in this passage of Jeremiah, it is hinted in the allusion, that the bill of divorcement was in those times given for weighty causes, and particularly on the account of light immodest behaviour. Divorces, indeed, became very common in the latter times of the Jewish state; especially when the school of Hillel had interpreted that law in a very loose sense, contrary, as is probable, to the opinion of their ancient doctors. And therefore our Saviour, to prevent the excesses and abuses that were committed in this matter, revoked the permission that had been allowed, and brought the ties of marriage to the original strictness.

But what our author cries out most against is the law concerning the trial of jealousy. He says, that 'a man moved with a jealous mind, whether with or without a cause, or whether real or only pretended, could put his wife to the trial of jealousy, and procure a priest to poison her, if he thought fit, and had received a valuable consideration for it,' p. 268. And so he goes on to make a very scandalous representation of the nature and design of that law.

I shall first make some general observations concerning this law for the trial of jealousy, and then answer this writer's exceptions against it.

As to the general ends of this law, they were good and excellent. Jealousy is a furious and unreasonable passion, and often produces the most dismal effects. And by the account the wise man gives of it, it is not improbable that in those countries it was particularly raging, *Prov. vi. 34, 35, Cant. viii. 6*. The general design of this law was to restrain the rage of jealousy, and hinder it from flying out into those furious excesses and resentments that it might otherwise produce. According to this law, the husband was not to take the punishment into his own hands, but to leave the cause to God, who would signalize his justice upon the woman if she was really guilty; and on the other hand, if she escaped the expected vengeance, he was to regard it as a declaration from heaven of her innocence; than which nothing could have a greater tendency to calm and satisfy his mind, and remove the suspicions he had conceived. So that by this law there was provision made for appeasing a cruel jealousy, for clearing suspected innocence, or for punishing

* Mr. Selden observes the remarkable difference in this respect between the law of Moses and that of Mohammed, who allows the husband that had divorced his wife to take her again, though he had divorced her three times, and she had each time been married to another, *Seld. Ux. Heb. lib. i. cap. 9, lib. iii. cap. 21*. And yet this author represents it, as if the Mahometan law were preferable to that of Moses, with regard to arbitrary divorcement and the multiplicity of wives and concubines, and had reformed very much upon it. See Letter to Eusebius, p. 43.

secret adulteries. And it had a manifest tendency to restrain the women from indecent liberties, and oblige them to a modest conduct, when there was such a law as this, whereby they might be called to a strict trial of their innocence, and in which they were taught to expect the most dreadful punishments from heaven in case they were guilty. These were the general ends of this law, and they were certainly valuable and important. And if for such ends as these, it pleased God to appoint such a law, and to interpose extraordinarily in execution of it, among that people and under that dispensation, when in so many instances he saw fit to interpose in an extraordinary manner; it must be owned to be a wonderful instance of the divine condescension; but I can see nothing in it that can be proved to be unworthy of the wisdom, the goodness, and justice of the Supreme Being. And if, as some learned persons think highly probable, there had been before this some extraordinary trials of innocence that had obtained among other nations in those early ages, and which were made subservient to the promoting of idolatry, it might seem fit to God to indulge something of this kind to his people, that they might not be under a temptation to have recourse to idols for these purposes, in conformity to the customs of other nations.*

As to the particular rites made use of on this occasion, they were all so contrived as to render the whole action more sacred and solemn, and to impress the minds of the people with a stronger sense of the divine interposition. Hence it was appointed, that this trial should only be at the sanctuary; the priests who had the management of sacred ceremonies in a peculiar manner committed to them, had the cognizance of it. There was a particular sacrifice appointed to be offered.† The water that was to be drank by the woman that was suspected, was to be holy, that is, as the Jews understand it, taken out of the laver that stood in the sanctuary, and which was employed in sacred uses; there was to be some dust scattered upon it taken off the floor of the sanctuary, and the drinking of this water was to be accompanied with a solemn adjuration. All these ceremonies, though this writer is pleased to ridicule them, tended to give a greater solemnity to the whole action, which was in the nature of an extraordinary appeal to heaven. And when once these ceremonies were divinely appointed, the effect could not be expected, if these ceremonies had not been observed.

Let us now consider what this writer offers against this law.

One objection is, that 'if a man only pretended jealousy, he might put his wife to this trial; and was not obliged in this case to name the person suspected, nor to declare the grounds of his

* See concerning this, Dr. Spencer de Leg. Hebr. Ritual. lib. iii. diss. I. cap. ii. sect. 3.

† Lest this writer should say this sacrifice was contrived for the benefit of the priest, I would observe, that the offering was only to be the tenth part of an ephah of barley, which is about the quantity of our pottle; without oil or frankincense; part of which was to be consumed upon the altar, so that the priest could get no great matter by it.

suspicion.' But by the unanimous consent of all the Jewish writers, before a man could bring his wife to this trial of jealousy, he was obliged to produce witnesses, both that he had given her warning not to be in secret with such a man, and that after this his warning or prohibition, she had been in secret with that man for some time. Each of these things he was to prove by two witnesses, or he could not be admitted to put his wife to this trial. See this proved by Mr. Selden, from the best Jewish authorities, *Ux. Hebr. lib. iii. cap. 13.*

But the chief objection is, the hand that the priest was to have in the whole management of this affair. The man was to bring his wife to the priest, who was to prepare the draught, and to sprinkle some of the dust of the sanctuary into it. And he thinks the husband might procure the priest to poison her, if he thought fit, and had received a valuable consideration for it. Besides, he observes, that 'the law has made no provision what must be done, supposing the priest himself had been the suspected person; and then he would doubtless have cleared the woman, and proved her innocency upon such a trial. So that a married woman could not be safe in playing the whore with any but a priest, and then she might be sure of being brought off upon any trial of jealousy in her husband.' And he thinks 'it is very plain, that such a law must have put every man's wife into the power, and left them at the devotion, of the priest.' pp. 268, 269.

All that this shows, is the author's forwardness to throw dirt upon the priests, and to suppose them guilty of the greatest villany and wickedness; though in this instance he has nothing but his own unreasonable prejudices and malice against them, to support the charge.

One would be apt to think, according to his representation of the matter, that there was a particular priest fixed by that constitution, in every village or parish; and that if a man was jealous of his wife, he was obliged by law to apply to that particular priest to try his wife, even though the priest himself happened to be the suspected person; in which case it might be expected, he would endeavour to manage it so as to bring her off upon the trial. Or if the man had only a mind to get rid of his wife, whether he suspected her or not, he had nothing to do but to hire the parish-priest to put poison into the water, upon pretence of sprinkling dust upon; and as this matter was very privately transacted, it might easily be done without danger of discovery.

But these are ridiculous suppositions, that proceed upon an entire ignorance, or wilful misrepresentation of that constitution. That trial of jealousy was not to be in a private way in the man's own country or town, but only at the sanctuary, where there were always considerable numbers of the most eminent persons; and where the chief council of the nation generally met and determined causes. Nor was it in the power of any particular priest, supposing he had a special interest in it, to procure that trial to be brought before him

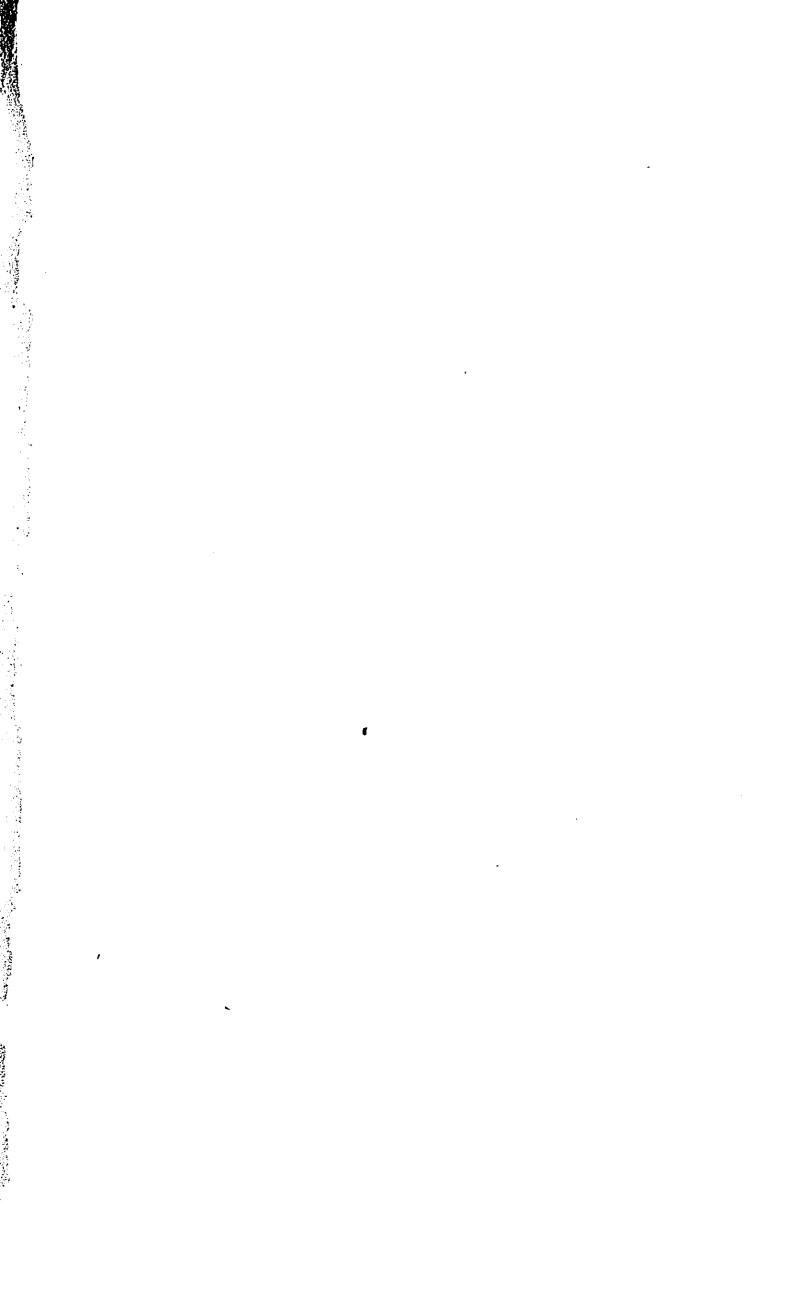
when he thought fit. For the several families, or courses of priests, officiated in their turns; and the particular priests belonging to each course, had their several services or offices assigned them by lot.* And supposing any particular priest to be the person suspected, as this writer puts the case, it is contrary to common sense to imagine that the man that was jealous, would bring his wife to be tried before that priest whom he suspected, when there were so many other priests ministering in their several courses, to whom he might bring her. The trial was not a secret thing, but done in a very public manner. For there were always considerable numbers of priests and Levites waiting and ministering at the sanctuary at the same time. And the Jews affirm, that the woman was not to drink the water, but in the presence of the great council; * who first did all they could to persuade her to acknowledge the fault, if she was guilty; which, if she did, she was put away from her husband without a dowry. And the priest that should attempt to poison the woman in such circumstances, and before such numbers of persons, must, instead of being thought politic and cunning, be supposed out of his senses; as well as the man that would attempt to put him upon it, since it was scarce possible to escape a discovery. Besides that, it would have been to no purpose for a man to attempt to bribe any particular priest, except he could have bribed the whole course at once, which was very numerous, to join in the design of poisoning the woman; since he could not know that that particular priest would be the person to whose lot it would fall to do that piece of service. Yet upon the strength of these absurd and wild suppositions, this writer triumphs, as if he had absolutely demonstrated the Mosaic economy to be an imposture. And so he takes his leave of this subject and of me, after insinuating, that I do not believe that men are to be judged by God at the last day, according to their works; and that I make the repentance to which pardon is promised in the gospel to consist only in some death-bed vows, professions, and promises; though *he knows* if he has read the book he pretends to answer, that I most expressly declare the contrary, see Div. Author. pp. 279, 280. These insinuations only show how gladly he would catch at any thing, which he thinks might tend to expose his adversaries, though, as it usually happens in such cases, he has only thereby exposed himself. I have now done with our author and his book, in which he sets up for a vindicator of moral truth and reason; but never were the sacred names of truth and reason more prostituted and abused, than they are by this writer. There is some pleasure in managing a controversy upon a subject of importance, with a person of learning and candour, where the debate is carried on with a regard to decency, and by fair reason and argument. But to have to do with one that can allow himself

* Concerning this, see Lightfoot, Hor. Hebr. in Luke i. 8, 9.

† See Selden, Ux. Hebr. lib. iii. cap. 15.

in gross misrepresentation and abuse, in low buffoonery, and confident assertions of plain falsehoods, is one of the last employments a man would choose. And therefore I hope I shall be excused, if I shall not think fit to meddle with this writer any more, except he should happen to offer something that looks like fair candid reasoning, which, if one may judge from what he hath hitherto done, there is little reason to expect.

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